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AFRICA'S No.1 HIP HOP MAGAZINE

HYPE

ISSUE 66 APR/MAY '15

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IN-DEPTH OPINION PIECE
SHOULD WEED BE LEGALISED?

FLABBA
R.I.P SKWATTA KAMP'S
FALLEN SOLDIER

DOUBLE COVER
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HYPE HONEY SMASHIS DJ DIMPLEZ BACK TO THE CITY 2015 MICKEY
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STRETCH YOUR NIGHT

30°
83%
08:06 PM
HEARTBEATS
OVER NEW YORK

**STAY
CURIOUS**

Lee

HYPE

bigger than hip hop

INTERNATIONAL



"BOEING JETS, GLOBE EXPRESS. OUT THE COUNTRY BUT THE BLUEBERRY STILL CONNECT" - JAY-Z



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HYPE
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JAY-Z

1987, BROOKLYN

VISUALZ: SOURCEGLOBE



YOWORD

SEND US YOUR THOUGHTS! PRAISE US, DISS US, GIVE US A MILLION BUCKS (IF THAT'S YOUR THING); WHATEVER'S ON YOUR MIND, WE WANNA HEAR IT. BEST LETTERS GET PUBLISHED. YOU CAN REACH US ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK TOO, WE LOVE HEARING FROM YA'LL!

FACEBOOK.COM/HYPEMAGAZINE @HYPEMAGAZINESA HYPE@HYPEMAGAZINE.CO.ZA



#SALUTESIMMA

It was kinda sad to learn that Simma is stepping down as HYPE editor. She has brought something to SA and African hip hop in the 10 years she's been with the mag. You can give yourself a pat on the shoulder, Simma, for what you have done for the game. Represent the culture everywhere you go. I salute you. Jay-Over Elzi-Mo Makhetha

STOP D*CK RIDING!

Yo Flava Flav call 911 HYPE mag is a joke. So let me get this straight: Kendrick Lamar raps about Zulus and Xhosas and ya'll are all over him? How about you give us something from the greatest punchline artist of all time, Fabolous. Holla at your boy when you decide to be serious. Bhekinkosi Thusi

Yo Nkosi It's definitely not CNN-worthy news, I agree. And Fab is king in my books too. So we got a shout-out from arguably the hottest emcee at the moment and got a little flustered that a tiny piece of our history was mentioned on a global platform. Cats have gotten excited over less, you feel me? (Remember those terrible shoes with the wheels in the back from your childhood?) We all love rap but don't take everything so seriously, my dude. Even Superman takes toilet breaks from the arduous task of saving the world. Fred, editor

SIMMA STAN

Oh Simma! I never missed even one of your issues. Farewell sister! And thanks for your contribution to SA hip hop. @i_Empho

ONES AND TWOS

The Sun Screen mixed by @P_Kuttah still my favourite mixtape thus far. We all know Kuttah can scratch. They don't make 'em like that no more *sigh* @SDZ4RAP, Amersfoort, South Africa

'Sup Lucky, As a fan of the art of scratching myself, I have to agree with you there. That tape was fire. Keep your eyes firmly planted on the next few HYPE Sessions mixtapes though, you might just be pleasantly surprised. Fred, editor

SALUTE SIMMA

Farewell Simone Harris, you've been the truest servant of SA's hip hop. Thanks for the amazing issues #SaluteOGSimma @KavethaFuture

WINNING LETTER

HYPE MAGAZINE DOESN'T SUPPORT LOCAL TALENT

Why @hypemag_sa didn't have @mrcashtime or @rikyrickworld on any of the last two issues is quite a mystery to me ... #JustSaying

Reason

What's good Reezzy?

I felt compelled to not answer, but just shed light on this question because it was starting to become like when your awesome pre-teen cousin asks you a complicated question about sex which you can't answer without completely shattering their childhood innocence, so you just keep being evasive and hope that each time your phone rings you can reach for it with your profusely sweaty hands and answer the call to smoothly find your way out of the situation (No? Just me? Okay). Also, I respect the fact that it came from you because you gave a voice to an issue that I know resonates with so many people. And I'ma be real about this too.

Local HYPE magazine covers perform terribly. I know – that's still a hard thing for me to say/ think to myself. One would think that especially now when there is local content being produced at a high level and on a more consistent basis, there would be more of a demand for local content. Sadly, this isn't true. And this is not a challenge that is exclusive to HYPE or even the publishing industry. If anything, you and this magazine are in the same boat in the sense that your general influence, social media reach, radio and television rotation and industry presence don't reflect in your album sales. Promoters who book international acts are in the same boat, and so are those who sell dope local urban merchandise but have to throw parties to ensure a consistent revenue stream because the clothes themselves can't sustain the business.

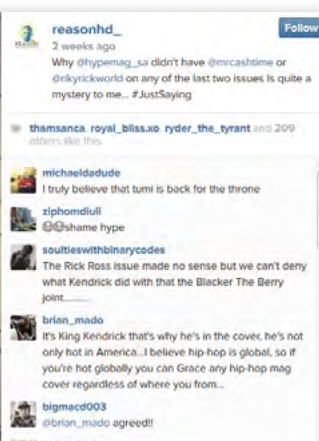
I've often sat by myself, angry at the consumers because they are the ones who chose to make the December/January 2015 cover with Rick Ross the highest selling issue in three years (true story). This is against AKA, whose impact on Africa has been unrivalled; Cassper, who has captured the heart of the nation like Snoop Dogg catches cases; Khuli Chana, who is about as much a part of the South African street fabric as Mayo and skoppas are; and of course, you. Reason.

If I were to say to you that street music is dying and you need to stop working with Instro and 37, drop the features with Locnville and mama Yvonne Chaka Chaka, and ditch the Beamer and Jays for a 325i and some Timbs because the streets need you, that might make you a little apprehensive in the current music climate. Because the reality is, though many will big you up for doing 'the streets' a service, you will likely not sell any units, which will disable you from sharing your music while not only still being able to provide for your fam, but feeding the structures that make it possible to continue making your music. In the same light, I would love nothing more than to splurge every single local dope rapper in the game on these covers. But the current reality is, if there are five local covers in a row, that sixth issue of HYPE – local or international – may never see the shelves because there won't be any capital to produce it.

Am I saying we are industry slaves? No. I'm saying until we are at a level where everything we wear, listen to, watch and experience that is local can support the structure, we have to continue fighting for the vision. But it'll be gradual. And you have my personal commitment that this fight is being taken seriously. Now I would like to call on you (and everyone else who is about this culture) to help us make the dream a reality. 'Cause ultimately, the power lies with the numbers. YOU decide what is 'real' and 'cool' and 'authentic', not with your Tweets, corridor talks with homies, Insta posts; but with your buying power. And I will make sure that every time we try to produce the best product possible. Deal?

Fred, editor

PS: Much love for the ongoing support over the years. And you owe all of us a video for 'Ungambiza'.



HYPE

bigger than hip hop



AKA

VISUALZ: FLO MOKALE

05:50AM



FROM THE TIME I WAS ABOUT 13, I PLAYED basketball at a park the whole neighbourhood called Beirut. It was in Yeoville, central Johannesburg, situated between a cluster of schools and daycare centres on one side. On the other, a silent explosion of cheap drugs, prostitution, elaborate fraud, debauchery, Chappies wrappers and empty Lemon Twist cans all disguised as bustling small businesses livened the hood enough to give one the illusion of normalcy. It was in that small crevice of the earth that I experienced my first high.

And I know what you're thinking, but it's not 4:20 as I'm writing this and I'm not talking about the green stuff. I'm speaking about the thing that gets your heart racing and triggers the adrenaline to start pumping so fast you feel like you could lift up the big dude from Big Nuz with one hand. The thing that, during the time that you're busy with it, completely consumes you and everything else in the world ceases to exist. That thing in particular was running down the court with a ball in my hands, terrorising defenders and finishing at the hoop with a soft, fundamentally sound finger roll (don't worry if this means nothing to you, it's just basketball talk).

For you it might be something else. Like creating music, collecting stamps or caressing feet (I hope not but it's a real thing). Whatever. The point is, everyone has that thing. And when you find it, you know you need to do whatever it takes to make sure that you can do it for the rest of your life.

Here's the plot twist though, it didn't work out for me. I didn't make it to the NBA. Hell, I didn't even make it to the Metro League. Crazy, right? Not really, in retrospect I can admit that I wasn't as good in real life as I thought I was in my mind. Anyway, for a few years, I felt like my heart was ripped out of my chest and I wallowed in my depression with no purpose, studying something I hated while doing odd jobs on the side, from working at a pizza store to doing freelance writing stints and coaching kids under 16.

And then Simone and Mizi came along and for some inexplicable reason, took interest in my sporadic writing style and vast knowledge of hip hop trivia. I started the

Hipolitics column with no real end game except to make some extra dough to impress Pelenomi Moila, who I was infatuated with and trying to court. Instead, I ended up confirming something that the universe was trying to tell me for some time: there was more to the life thing than my one dimensional basketball spectrum led me to believe there was.

In 2011, when Simone was on maternity leave, because of my rapport with the **HYPE** team working as a contributor, she afforded me the opportunity to guest edit an issue. It was the most stressful experience of my life (after having to deal with the cancellation of *Frasier* of course). Four weeks of no sleep, dealing with terminology I wasn't familiar with, queuing for taxis in the mid-summer heat; all this for what exactly? Where am I going with this? At the end of that ordeal, when that issue lay in my hands, it was the first time in my life I felt that 'thing' since the last time I ran down the court terrorising defenders and finished at the hoop with a soft, fundamentally sound finger roll. And I knew I had to fight and do whatever it took to earn the opportunity to do it again for the rest of my life. So here I am.

Thank you Fungayi. Thank you Mizi. Thank you Simone, who was patient with me all these years and continues to support the kid. Thanks to my even more understanding team, my sub editors, incredible designer and production team. Thank you Pelenomi. Thank YOU for picking up this issue and allowing me to serve the culture. It's 05:50am as I am writing this. Haven't slept in weeks and I am way beyond my deadline at this point, so if you get to read this you'll know I haven't been fired yet. This is a great issue. Read every word.

"First classic in the bag, I hope you bought it." – Cassper

The Freditor,

**"FIRST CLASSIC IN THE BAG,
I HOPE YOU BOUGHT IT"**
— CASSPER

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PUBLISHER Urs Honegger
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Gerard Peter
EDITOR Fred Kayembe | fred@hypemagazine.co.za
SUB-EDITORS Noleen Fourie, Nicolette Els
EDITORIAL INTERN Kgadi Mothotse
DTP STUDIO MANAGER Paul Kotze
LEAD DESIGNER Roelof Meintjes
DESIGNERS Cronje Du Toit, Perpetua Chigumira

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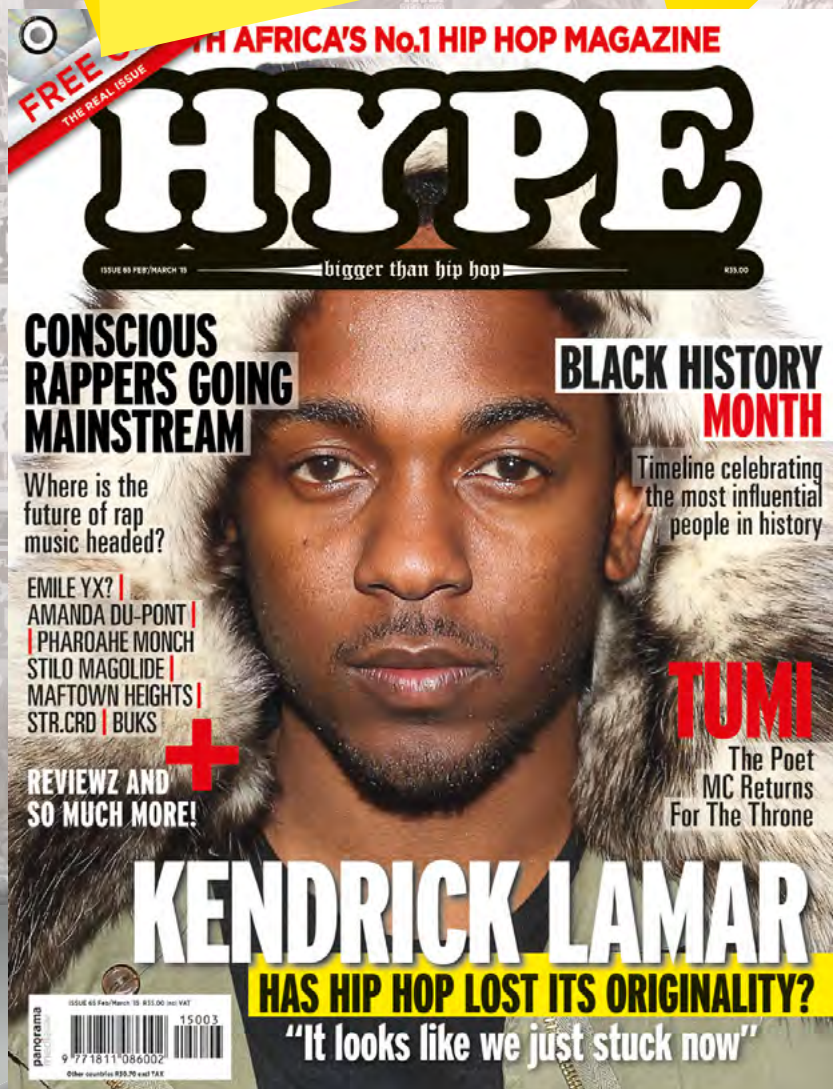
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TITE STUFF

It's about that time again when we let you in on the nicest gear for the season. This edition pays special interest to the timepiece. 'Cause in the wise words of Young Jeezy: "Time is money."



01



02



03



04



05



06

01 Butan Wear Ostrich Polo Bucket R299

02 Puma Blaze of Glory OG (price on request)

03 GalxBoy White On White Socks (price on request)

04 PUMA ALife Crew Sweater (price on request)

05 New Era 59FIFTY Pop Up Disney Donald – grey/ yellow R289

06 Adidas D Rose 5 Boost

Define who you are this season and make a statement with the bold new collection from Police. With our range of daring, modern designs, you'll feel empowered to take on the world and be noticed. From dangerous curves to confident lines, Police has a variety of masculine accessories (watches and jewellery) guaranteed to inspire. Assert your identity this season and become part of the Police style revolution.



07



08



09



10



11



12

07 ARMOR R2,295

08 DIAMOND R2,395

09 DRIVER R1,895

10 REAPER R1,595

11 SUNSET R1,995

12 CONCEPT R1,995

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WORD ON THE STREET



WHOSE WORLD IS THIS?

In 1994 a 17-year-old rapper from Queens, New York by the name of Nasir Jones reflected on a scene from the movie *Scarface* and plotted world domination when he rapped: "The world is yours! The world is yours!" He's since realised that dream. What he also did was create the soundtrack for hip hop, conquering the world with music. With the South African hip hop scene having dominated the country as a genre in the past year, many have started to make awesome strides to make the rest of the world recognise the level of greatness that is being produced from this country. Here is a brief timeline of South African hip hop flying the flag high with amazing international achievements from the past couple of months.

September 2014

Reason and Jack Parow tour Europe separately. They meet in Amsterdam and play the same sold-out show with Parow headlining.

October 2014

Tumi headlines at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York, supported by Simphiwe Dana and The Soil for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Mandela's inauguration.

October 2014

Jonny Joburg performs at Diddy's ReVolt Music Conference in Miami in front of a room of influential media and music business execs, ending his freestyle with: "Sign me." Meets up with TDE.



September 2014

JR performs to a crowd of approximately 1,000 in Dubai.

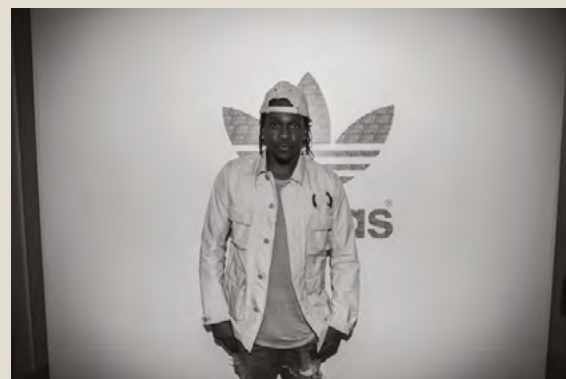
October 2014

Okmalumkoolkat performs in Oslo and tours Europe.

SNEAK PEEK TRUE TO THE SOLE

Run DMC paved the way for non-athlete sneaker collaborations in 1983 when the group signed a \$1 million deal to endorse the Superstar sneaker. In more recent times this avenue has started to open up with an increasing number of hip hop artists partnering with global brands to release concept kicks.

The problem is, since recognising the success of this selling model, in some cases both the brands and the artists have started to use each other for profit and hype in obviously forced and uninventive partnerships that clearly had no organic synergies. Where certain 'collaborations' have been a result of pure opportunity, here are four recent sneaker partnerships that took the endorsing artist's persona into account when interpreting the product.

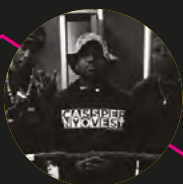


PUSHA T X ADIDAS EQT GUIDANCE '93

Considering Pusha's entire catalogue is virtually an A to Z guide on how to survive the dope game, it's a little surprising that with all the sensitivity around brand image, adidas partnered up with him. Pusha explained to *GQ* that the full chalk white colour of the shoe, the fish scale patterns on the heel and cracked leather all reinforce his influence of the design ('white' and 'fish scale' are both street names for cocaine and 'cracked' is a pun). The shoe retailed for \$200 (around R2,324) and had a limited release.

November 2014

Cassper Nyovest and Anatii record a yet unreleased song with US rapper Cassie Veggies. Cassper drops a video for the 'Doc Shebeleza' remix with Talib Kweli.



November 2014

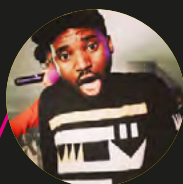
Reason drops a song with Pac Div on Audio HD.

February 2015

Jonny Joburg's music video for 'Michael Jackson' premieres on ReVolt, making him the first South African artist to debut a video on Diddy's network.

February 2015

Okmalumkoolkat's music video for 'Holy Oxygen' launches via *Complex* magazine.

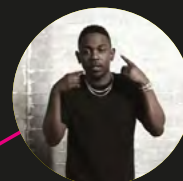


February 2015

Zimbabwean-born locally-based producer Brian Soko (who produced Cassper's 'Phumakim') wins two Grammys for his production on Beyoncé's 'Drunk in Love'.

February 2015

Kendrick Lamar mentions 'Zulus and Xhosas' in his second single, 'The Blacker the Berry'.



February 2015

Famed Scottish alternative hip hop group Young Fathers hit JHB and CPT and collaborate with Mashabhuqe KaMamba.



February 2015

AKA breaks into the UK as 'All Eyes On Me' gets playlisted on BBC 1.

April 2015

Cashtime Life, Dreamteam, Yanga and more perform alongside Rae Sremurd, Schoolboy Q and Kid Ink at Mary Fitzgerald Square, JHB – and dominate.

February 2015

Cassper Nyovest and Anatii drop 'Ghetto' featuring DJ Drama.



KENDRICK LAMAR X REEBOK VENTILATION

K.Dot made his debut in the sneaker world with the announcement of his partnership with Reebok Classic to release a few variations of the much-loved Ventilator pair, seen on his feet in the 'I Am' video. Though the 'king of New York' was not involved in his design process, he's suggested that the collaboration is more about the message the product carries than about just sneakers. Kendrick revealed in an interview that as an extension of the partnership, the brand is also helping him develop programmes designed to keep kids off the streets.



PHARRELL WILLIAMS X ADIDAS SUPERSTAR

Last year Pharrell announced his official collaboration with adidas and has since teased us with images of the adidas Superstar in literally all the shades of the rainbow. Skateboard P is known to have a bubbly personality and considering the global sensation 'Happy' and his signature multi-award winning laid-back sound, this release screams Pharrell. In the past, his sneaker lines with Bathing Ape and Ice Cream have also been heavily colourful and animated.



TYGA X L.A GEAR

In February T-Raw told radio show The Breakfast Club that he was ready to assume a more hands-on role in creating merchandise and that he will be releasing a line with throwback hip hop sneaker and clothing label L.A Gear. Extremely prominent in the '90s, even partnering with Michael Jackson to release a signature boot, the brand has been very quiet in the past decade. Tyga believes being a born and raised LA personality with a street background, he embodies what the brand stands for and can take it further. And of course, L.A Gear went for it. We can't argue with that. But bringing the '90s back will be a tough task.

SPW
33
GH.

Written notice TO APPEAR IN THE HYPE COURT
(Issued in terms of Section 202 of the Hip Hop Criminal Procedure Act, 2006)

Please note: This feature is purely for entertainment purposes.

A

Written notice TO APPEAR IN THE HYPE COURT (Issued in terms of Section 202 of the Hip Hop Criminal Procedure Act, 2006)

TO

B R Y A N W I L L I A M S
A K A B I R D M A N



FINE

Gender	Age	Occupation
M	—	Music video hand-rubber

B

You are hereby called upon in terms of Section 202 of the Hip Hop Criminal Procedure Act, 2006, to appear before the **HYPE** Court at a date and time which will be indicated at the court's convenience, and to remain in attendance there to answer to charge(s) of contravening the Act.

The below mentioned offence took place on or around the following date

2015

You are hereby accused of the following:

Weezy has been in a legal battle with father figure and Cash Money boss Birdman for alleged unpaid fees to the value of \$8 million and wants out of his deal. Not a completely new scenario in the music business, but we have to say, we never thought we'd see the day two grown heterosexual men who claimed to love each other so much that they kissed (for really, really long) in public and then made a song celebrating it would part over shady business practices. Weezy has generated millions for Cash Money as well as signed Nicki and Drake, making them even more millions. So Birdman, pay the man his damn money and Free Weezy!

C

Admissions of guilt fine(s) amounting to the following figure may be paid, in which case payment must be made within 30 working days following the date of issue.

R

30,000,000 00

D

Official Codes

Court

1 3 6 7 4 5 4 | 2 3 7 2 1 1 0 | 3 4 2 2 1 7 8 | 4 9 2 0 1 5 6 | 5 3 5 0 0 2

88 / WD887930 / 3273

POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION

USED



IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO THE ACCUSED

Warning

1. If you fail to comply with this notice or fail to remain in attendance at the proceedings you may be sentenced to a fine which will double the amount payable or community service for a period not exceeding three months.
2. Representation may be made within seven working days of issue of this summons.
3. Should you decide to dispute the charge(s) against you:
3.1 You are required to inform the **HYPE** office of your intentions in writing on or before the date that will be communicated. Failing to do so may delay the case or may even result in a postponement of the case.
3.2 and if you wish to make use of a legal practitioner, you are strongly advised not to do so.

22
(V)
page.

Written notice TO APPEAR IN THE HYPE COURT
(Issued in terms of Section 202 of the Hip Hop Criminal Procedure Act, 2006)

"SHOUT-OUT TO TATA MADIBA, I'M OUT HERE ABUSING MY FREEDOM"

— CASSPER NYOVEST

The United States and South Africa are similar in the sense that at the height of their respective oppressive governments, both countries had fierce civil rights movements fuelled with people who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. Two such freedoms and possibly the greatest of them all are freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

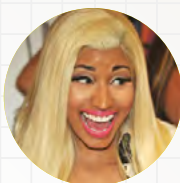
Now we're not the Nazis or anything, but there has to be a limit, right? Every right has to come with responsibilities. Otherwise people just abuse their freedoms.

On that note, all hip hop heads would appreciate it if artists considered their responsibility to not patronise us with terrible lyrics that go way beyond the line of reasonable doubt. Here are a few cases of rappers slightly abusing their freedom of expression with ridiculous lyrics.



"ASDKJFSDALFA;S LJKDFSALKHFKUW DJLLKXXXXWSD... LIFESTYLE/ JASDLKJSAFHSDAL,KF KASJFKASL;KFMNASK ;LM... MY LIFESTYLE"

Young Thug – 'Life Style'
Let's be honest, this list wouldn't be complete without a Young Thug lyric. He's a novelty in the game and no matter how one might feel about him or his questionable sense of style, he's added a lot of ambience to many of the international hits in the past year. Sure, if you search the web enough you'll stumble upon what we believe to be the true lyrics. But unfortunately we cannot excuse the fact that the guy didn't even think it was necessary for the lyrics to be audible for us to like the song. He was right. But still, a definite case of abuse of freedom here.



"I DON'T DUCK NOBODY BUT TAPE/ YEAH, THAT WAS A SETUP FOR A PUNCHLINE ABOUT DUCT TAPE"

Nicki Minaj – 'Only'
Okay, so Nicki achieved a phonetic pun with 'duck' and 'duct'. But puns can only be applauded if they contribute to a good line that actually makes sense. This is one of those lyrics that seem like a good idea at the late night studio session the day before you're due to hand in your album to the label. Then the next day you realise how bad it is, but it's too late and you just run with it because Drake, Chris Brown and Wayne are featured on the song and you're going to shoot a sexy video for it, so no one is going to care what you say.

"TRAYVON MARTIN, I'M NEVER MISSING MY TARGET"

Rick Ross – 'Black & White'
One gets the sense that no one actually told Rozay what actually went down in the scenario he's referencing. A 17-year-old US black kid walking down the street wearing a hoodie was shot and killed by a white man for looking "threatening." To use such an insensitive reference as a metaphor to convey that he makes a lot of money is extremely irresponsible and thoughtless. Ironically, he missed the target with this lyric.



"POLICE TAKING SHOTS AND I AIN'T TALKING 'BOUT CIROC"

Diddy – 'Don't Shoot'
This line just proves that Diddy would promote himself at a friend's funeral if the opportunity presented itself. He might be one of the smartest businessmen of all time, never missing out on opportunities to further his brands. But, there ARE limits. We have to shoot Diddy down for a very distasteful attempt at trying to plug his Ciroc vodka on a social awareness song about police brutality against black people, in protest of the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Very tacky, Puff.



"I MADE SOMETHIN' OUT OF NOTHIN', SEAN DON THE MAGICIAN/ SHE DOIN' TRICKS WITH HER P*SSY, I GUESS SHE'S A VAGICIAN"

Big Sean – 'Alright' (by Logic)
There are limitless reasons why this is a terrible lyric. We see where Sean was going with this second line, but merging 'vagina' and 'magician' together to convey what an incredible time he had in the bedroom is hardly genius. Not to mention that it is clearly forced. You have to try to do better.



NEGATIVE G POINTS

NO. JUST NO.

TOOK CIVILISATION BACK 100 YEARS

FOREFATHERS DIDN'T DIE FOR THIS

MIGHT NEED TO QUIT RAP

ARTIST



JUSTICE LEAGUE

WHICH SOCCER PLAYER ARE YOU?

We love soccer. We love rappers. They are not as different from each other as one would think. In this edition of Justice League, we see how Pro squares up against his football kicking counterpart, Teko Modise.

CHILD OF THE SOIL

PRO Straight out the door, Prokid left no space for anyone to wonder where he was from. Born and raised in Soweto, he has proudly worn his township on his sleeve his entire career, even having two songs in his discography named after his place of birth.

TEKO MODISE Teko Modise was born in Soweto, Meadowlands, and is as much a part of the township as kotas and taxi ranks. That's why when he eventually became an acclaimed pro footballer, after serving time at three other clubs, he took it back to where it all began (Soweto) by signing with Orlando Pirates where he spent the longest time of his career.

YOUNG LEGEND

PRO After *Heads And Tales* dropped, the word was out that the game had changed. By Pro's third album, *Dankie San*, he held a unanimous position in local rap as a pioneer of music style and a fierce and unmatched lyricist, topping charts, winning awards and getting some of the biggest cheques promoters could sign.

TEKO One day an up-and-comer, winning Mvela Golden League Player of the Season while playing for City Pillars during the 2005/2006 season, and the next day it was impossible to speak about local soccer without mentioning Teko's name. He took the honours of PSL

Footballer of the Year in 2008 and 2009 and also became a frequent feature on the national team.

OH CAPTAIN MY CAPTAIN

PRO In 2010 Pro decided to share all the knowledge and expertise he'd accumulated over the years of being a premium emcee and took Red Button under his wing. In partnership in his stable at the time, Pro led and mentored Button and a few others on the tricks of the trade.

TEKO With a knack for leadership, Teko has captained both the national team as well as his current team Mamelodi Sundowns.

GREENER PASTURES

PRO After spending almost four years on DJ Sbu's TS Records where Pro thrived, he mysteriously left the record label after releasing his fourth album *Snakes And Ladders* (2009), not going to a new record label. He would later pick up with Continua but has never really regained the grip he once had.

TEKO After record-breaking years at Orlando Pirates, Teko departed for Mamelodi Sundowns after having a fall-out with Dutch legend Ruud Krol. Teko has managed to keep a decent work ethic, but over the years has been criticised by some for prioritising his alleged lavish life (documented on Instagram) over his career.

FBI:

FRED-ERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CASE: Overtime

ACCUSED: Solo

INVESTIGATION BRIEF: In 'Overtime', a single from the South African Hip Hop Awards' Best Newcomer 2014, Solo delivers punch for punch with the aggressiveness of early Mike Tyson. The following is among the witted bars he drops on the banger.

*Who better than homie?
Your crew might know me
Jerry Mofokeng when I view guys closely
Because act as much as they like they've got
their good eye on me*

EXPLANATION

In this very brief couple of rhymes, Solo flexes his lyrical muscles at the competition while making use of a local icon to drive his pun. Jerry Mofokeng is a legendary South African actor (known for acting in movies such as *Cry*, *The Beloved Country*; *Mandela And De Klerk*; and the 2005 Academy Award-winning film *Tsotsi*), who is blind in one eye. Notice Solo's use of the word 'act' having the double meaning effect of pointing out the rappers who pretend to not see him as a threat, as well as 'act' in the academic sense (like Bra Jerry), driving home the punchline perfectly.

CASE STATUS: Closed

HYPE
bigger than hip hop

SZA

VISUALZ: SOURCEGLOBE



PROFILE

MELO(DY) IS KEY

You know when you're on YouTube and you search for an awesome song that also happens to be very popular, but instead of the actual video you're met with a clip of an awkward middle-aged marine biologist doing a very underwhelming acoustic or a cappella cover of that song? Yeah, Ms Melo B Jones is the complete opposite of everything in that scenario.



ATTRACTING ONLINE ATTENTION AND building momentum through her ear-gasmic a cappella covers of songs like AKA's 'Run Jozi' and Bobby Shmurda's 'Hot N*gga', the Kagiso-born northern Jo'burg-raised songstress is both soulful and jiggy. And even though many are just realising this fact now, she and her close circle have known it for a very long time.

"I guess you can say I've been singing since I could talk. I actually found out I could sing when I was about seven years old. I was singing in my room one day and my brother burst through the door demanding that I turn down the radio," she humble-brags. "It took me a while to figure that that must've been a compliment. I took classical music as a subject in high school and have been pretty serious about music ever since."

If the constant Jill Scott comparisons aren't enough to convince you, the fact that her influences are mainly from the Motown era of R&B/soul and jazz might be a little more reassuring for those who appreciate a more classic sound. Throw in her modern sensibilities and ability to tune her ear and voice to multiple genres of music and you have a young lady who has lent her vocals to the upbeat sounds of house and electronic music. She's collaborated with Crazy White Boy and Kid Fonque, and then also been able to throw down that good ol' soul on hip hop instrumentals of the likes of Ill Skillz and HiClas.

And there is no limit to her diversity either. Melo is part of an eclectic international music collective by the name of Analogue Divisions, which includes producers Trey Hemingway and 4real, and rapper HiClas.

"We all 'met' online – Soundcloud, to be exact – and decided to work together on a couple of tracks. It became so frequent that they then approached me to ask that I join the collective early last year. We just get one another; we bring different things to the table and generally have the same message to put out, music-wise. They produce most of my music today and we still plan on putting out a lot more as a collective."

With the intention of dominating 2015, Melo is more than up to the task.

"I really think SA needs a lot more neo-soul and R&B to be pushed this year and in the future, and I intend on being one of the musicians on the forefront of that movement."

Melo(dy) is key. ■

TWITTER: @MELOB_JONES
SOUNDCLOUD: MELO B JONES
BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES: MELOBOOKINGS@GMAIL.COM

VERBALZ: DERF EBMEYAK // VISUALZ: MELO B JONES

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NEWCOMER'S DELIGHT



As you all already know, this is where we give you 10 cats, hungry and fresh out the booth! They tell us why they deserve a chance to be featured as the next best thing in the next issue, and YOU decide who gets it. Hit up www.hypemagazine.co.za to rep your city and cast your vote for the freshest Newcomer's Delight candidate.



■ J-SEC
THANDONJE
"My ambition was to live like music."
Twitter: @ThandoNje



■ RUSTENBURG
BETSWÉ
"Be yourself and love what you do."
Isn't on Twitter



■ NELSPRUIT
LENZO
"Motivated by the fear of being average."
Twitter: @Lenzo__



■ BLOEMFONTEIN
LAIKI
"Progress is the birth child of faith backed with action."
Twitter: @Laiki_sa



■ FREE STATE
LAVA
"I am the King of Sotho rap. Ba botse bo mrepa kao fela if you don't believe me."



■ MPUMALANGA
TRUVILAKAZI
"In order to gain acknowledgement, a great deal of work will be needed."
Twitter: @truvilakazi



■ RUSTENBURG
LORE & OFENTIC
"Go ikitsi Ke Motheo wa Seriti."
Twitter: @Lore_n_Ofentic



■ SOWETO
MOTIF
"Taking hip hop back to the streets."
Twitter: @iammotif



■ CAPE TOWN
ZANZOLO
"Hip hop artist and cultural activist who uses art as a tool to mobilise and inspire the masses who listen to my music."
Twitter: @zanzoloN



■ DURBAN
PRINSTON
"A lot of people refer to me as Durban's No 1 Hustler. I wear many hats, produced my whole *STREET DREAMS* EP, did the graphic work, mixed, mastered, wrote and produced, so that's the kind of artist I am."
Twitter: @therealprinston

WINNER

■ LUSAKA - JHB

NAFF TEE ALI — "I'M COMING LIKE A TSUNAMI"

Demolishing his competition on the Newcomer's Delight poll with a record-topping 17,800 votes, there is nothing left to be said about this month's people's champion, Naff Tee Ali. Sharp as a needle and on a mission to turn the rap game on its head, we let him tell you for himself why he's got next.

How would you describe your music and style?

It's hard to describe my music, it's like a blend of West Coast grit, East Coast flare and South Side bounce. My style allows me to go deep in and out of so many different sounds, making them my own. My stand-out feature has to be my ability to paint pictures with my words. I like to tell stories, I love melody, and soul and emotion are two of my favourite ingredients in my music. I'm always getting told I sound like Kanye West or Kendrick Lamar, but I've been rapping since before I even heard of these two, so maybe they got it from me. I'll have to ask them when I meet them.

What do you think sets you apart from any other dude coming out right now?

That would have to be my story. I have a gift and the fact that there is a story to the reason I rap and make music puts me in a whole different league. For me it's more than just putting out tracks, it's about taking you on a journey with me. I'm more than just a rapper, I'm a writer, a lyricist and a performing poet. I've sacrificed too much just to be able to keep laying verses today and I'll still be making music when I'm 70 (not rap I'm sure). I've got nothing else to lose and I believe it's for a greater purpose that I share my gift and my story with the world.

What has been the biggest highlight for your music so far?

Well there are so many highlights to pick from, from memorable performances to phone calls from fans halfway round the globe calling me just to tell me they love the music, but I'll say so far the biggest has to be my first **HYPE** feature on the Top 10 of Newcomer's Delight. It was my first time in a print magazine and I was really excited about that. I'm a huge fan of **HYPE** so it was a good look.

What's the rap scene like in Zambia in comparison to SA? Have you been to SA?

I currently live in JHB, SA, but I know for a fact that the rap scene in Zambia is in amazing shape and spreading like a wildfire. The biggest artists are hip hop artists and more and more artists are emerging and raising the bar. Rap is also getting more exposure and coverage thanks to bloggers, social media and also the work artists themselves are putting into their craft. Compared to the SA rap scene though it's fair to say that the growth of the Zambian hip hop scene is not happening at the same speed as the SA hip hop scene. The SA rap scene is huge and a good number of artists are eating, but then on the other hand the Zambian rap scene is breeding artists who are determined to break into markets across the globe.

What are your musical plans for the year? Any shows, mixtapes, videos or albums?

This is a busy year for me and it's only a start. I released an amazing piece of work in January 2015, an EP titled *This Is It*, which is a must-have and a great listen. It's available online for stream and download. I'm always working on new music too so look out for that.

Who are your musical influences?

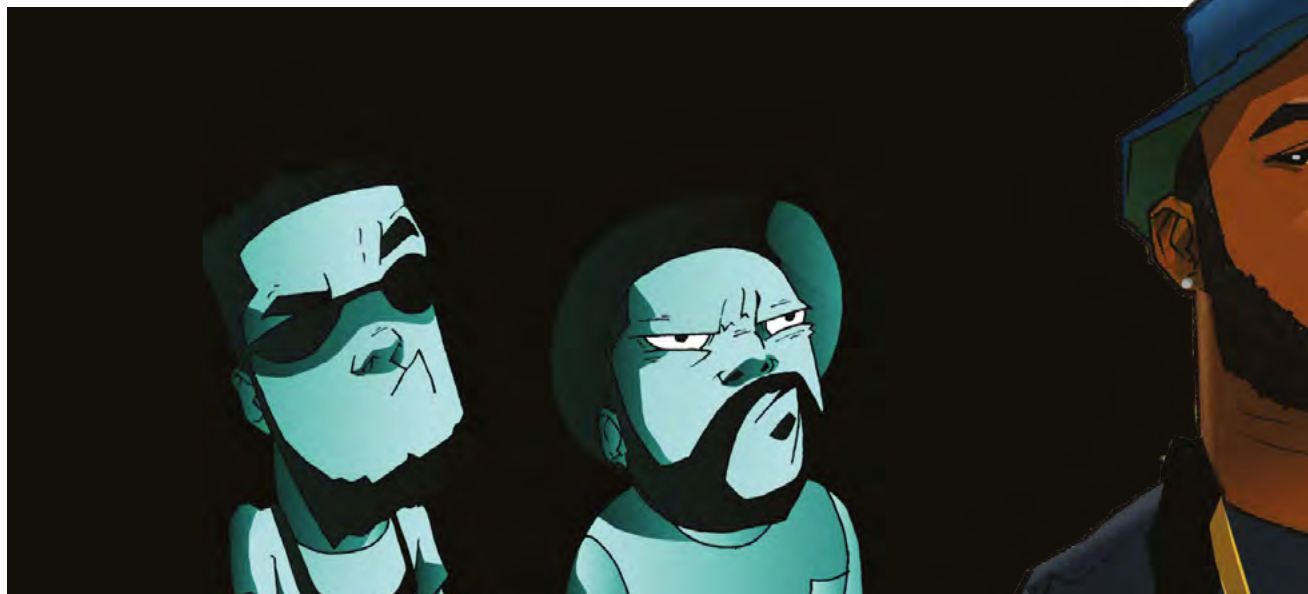
Michael Jackson made me fall in love with music, 2Pac made me want to rap. I love New Orleans jazz/blues and old school funk, it just makes me want to create and perform. I also listen to a lot of hip hop from the mid '90s and early

2000s from the West, East and South, which has really shaped my style, flow and delivery, and that's too many artists to mention.

Where can people find your stuff?

My music has a decent online presence, you just have to google 'Naff Tee Ali music' and a million results linking to my music will pop up. Some of my older music is in the process of being taken down for repackaging purposes but there is enough new music available online to hold people down until my next wave of music hits. I'm cooking up a tsunami. ☒





KRONIKLES OF HIP HOP

Question: what do you get when you huddle up eight friends in an ungodly hour of the morning who happen to have the ability to produce music and pull off sick animation, and also find common ground in their love for local hip hop and a bizarre sense of humour? No, not the plot of an experimental Tyler Perry movie fortunately. Ever since *The Kronikles of Hip Hop*, an addictively hilarious YouTube cartoon series that has parodied guys like K.O, Boyznbucks, Cassper Nyovest and AKA, surfaced in late 2014, the internet has just never been the same. **HYPE** sat down with the members of PHAAToonZ to get into their heads about this brilliant concept.

How on earth did the concept for *Kronikles of Hip Hop* come about and what did it take to make it happen?

It started off as a joke between Bringo, Tweezy and Chapterz. Around 2am in the morning, we were working on a show we are currently developing. During the discussion about anticipating the release of a certain local album we came up with the funny short story as our pilot. At 8am, the episode was completed and posted on our YouTube channel. The reception was unexpectedly overwhelming, so we decided to continue with the series and discuss topics that were important to the culture we embody.

Where/how did you guys acquire the skills to make something like this happen?

Seventy percent of what we do is self-taught. Thiaps, Bringo and Tweezy met at the National

School of Arts, which is where they began moulding their respective crafts through a mutual love for cartoons and music. Thiaps and Bringo would then meet up with KK and Chapterz at City Varsity where they would use the basic principles from the institution to form their own animated collaborations. Tweezy and B1 are relatives so they fed off each other in moulding their own sound, which is nothing short of SUPERB. Last but not least, YouTube – that's the real MVP.

Impressive. How do you come up with a plot/story for each edition?

We are the environment we absorb. We make music, visual art and everything else. Our life is immersed in the cultures we subscribe to, so the development of the plot stems from general discussions about the state of affairs. We don't find ways to target particular topics,



but instead we organically find peculiar moments to unravel in our own quirky perspective. The process of creating an entire episode can take from a few hours to three weeks.

There is a lot of animation talent in the country, but hip hop or even urban culture as a whole (whether through music videos, adverts or shows) has never been a focus. We've seen that change in the States with *The Boondocks* and then others that followed. Who/what are some of your artistic and comedic influences?

Hip hop content as a form of comic relief is rapidly growing in all spheres of the global community. Shows like *Boondocks* proved to be a commercial success. However, our core influences stemmed from elsewhere. We love animation and we grew up glued to Cartoon Network. We would disclose our influences as shows like *Sheep in the Big City*, *Kappa Mikey*, *The Adventures of Gumball*, *Filmore* and *Regular Show*. (We might be closet fans of *Mdu Comics* on a TUESDAY!)

As we matured, we became enthralled with the witty humour of the dope series *Kung Faux*, Larry David of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* fame, and the cult-classic *Pure Monate Show*.

I'm the biggest Larry David fan, I see the influence. So your website reads: "The animation is based on the political and social situations currently. The idea is that each episode should focus on a certain situation that happened and bring the lighter side of that situation comically." Do you feel that, as South Africans, 25 years into national freedom, we are really free to express ourselves?

Definitely. It's actually long overdue. We have surpassed the restraint of freely expressing ourselves; the fear to be completely honest about your reflections is more of a personal battle than it is a social one. Enter us, it's 25 years later and it's about time to show people that we can have these conversations.

Some artists (cartoonists, animators, comedians and the like) consider certain topics or public figures to be out of bounds. What would you guys consider to be 'too far' or do you not care about censorship at all?

There is a boundary we should always consider when dealing with society. The minute it becomes extremely offensive, we draw the line. We are just a bunch of funny people and our intent has never been to de-edify anyone. We already have more than enough public figures

THE PHAATOONZ STUDIO MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Shimane Applegreen: Executive producer

Sthembiso 'Bringo' Mpehle: Art director, animator and voiceover artist

Siyanda 'Chapterz' Sibisi: 3D animator and voiceover artist

Kearatwa 'KK' Sedidi: 2D/3D animator and voiceover artist

Tumelo 'Tweezy' Mathebula: Sound engineer and voiceover artist

Lindokuhle 'B1' Malloy: Sound engineer, animator and voiceover artist

Thapelo 'Thiaps' Molatlhegi: Brand designer and voiceover artist

Neo Nkwe: Marketing communications and voiceover artist



who test a nation's tolerance levels (or better known as "The Steve Hofmeyr Lit Test").

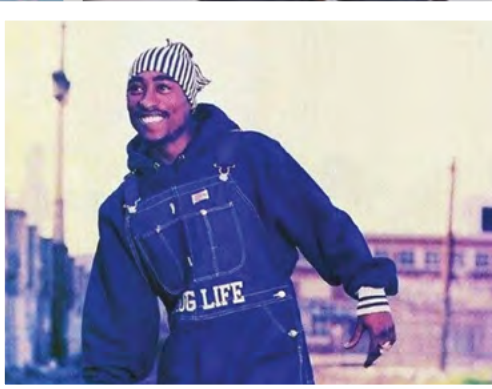
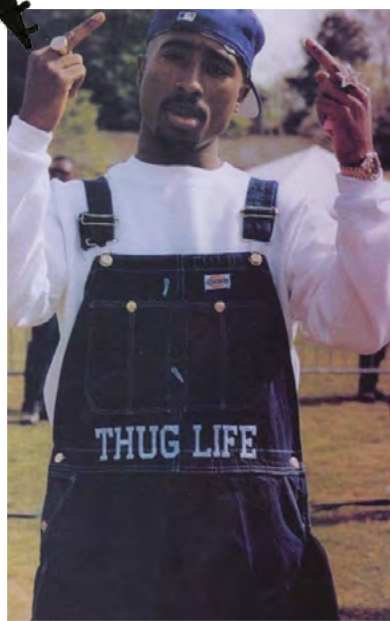
Have you received any flak from any artists who you've portrayed?

We haven't received any flak from any artist in particular, if anything we have received disapproval from a certain artist's affiliation that will remain unnamed. For now let's call him Voldemort.

What do you hope to achieve with your clips?

We want to re-invigorate the feeling we used to get from Cartoon Network within our own diaspora. More than anything, we would like to motivate and inspire a new breed of creatives, a new generation of thinkers, a movement. ☒

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THE BLUE PRINT EVOLUTION OF DENIM

STARTING OUT AS THE SIMPLE MAN'S LABOUR clothes, denim has become a modern-day closet staple for everyone. And with an endless variety of washes, fabrics, and ever-evolving silhouettes, the styling possibilities are infinite. From shorts, skirts, pants and dungarees to button-up shirts, chances are that there is at least one trusted denim garment in your closet that is not going anywhere any time soon.

Street culture has never been able to get enough of this timeless material; and one must admit, sometimes to its own detriment. One always wondered if, in those late '80s and '90s movies, the guy in the full baggy denim two-piece would have gotten away from the po-po if he'd been wearing a lighter material and gotten rid of the Timbs. A testament to the street's insistence to stay phly at all costs, even when facing jail time. No one can be mad at that though; this fashion thing is serious. And anyone who tells you there is a better feeling in the world than being fresh out of the shower and getting into that combo that you'd been plotting in your head, is lying harder than a political candidate during his/her election campaign.

VISUALZ: SOURCE GLOBE // VERBALZ: MAXINE STYLES

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There's a very fine line between looking like the phly incarnation of Kid n Play and looking like you're casting for a new season of *Dallas*. But for the most part, it's hard to go wrong with denim. The magic in it is that it can be customised to suit virtually any style. And that's why you'll thankfully never see the return of the fanny pack in your lifetime, for instance. Denim has no era. In the '80s, Big Daddy Kane and the likes wore dungarees with only one strap on. In the '90s Aaliyah, Wu-Tang and Kriss Kross rocked it two-piece and baggy, the latter customising their jeans in the back-to-front fashion that quickly grew popular. Towards the end of the early 2000s, the skinny fits popped off with guys like Lil Wayne and Fab switching up their throwbacks for a sleeker look, which got the OGs mad and questioning the values of the old school. In the present day all of these elements exist simultaneously.

Just in time for the first few chills of the year as autumn kicks in, we salute the fine material that has served us so well. ✎



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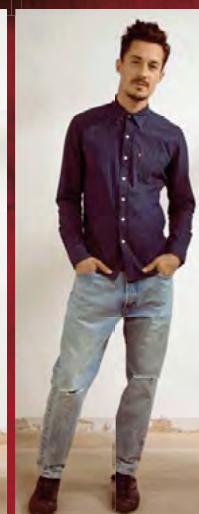
DOWN-SIZED

TRUE-TO-SIZE

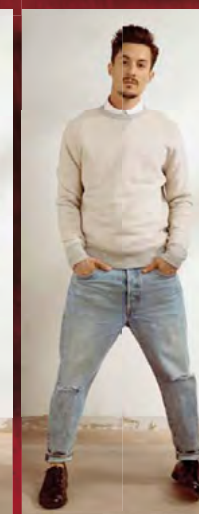
UP-SIZED



SLIM
THROUGH
THIGH



REGULAR
THROUGH
THIGH



RELAXED
THROUGH
THIGH



T/SU
NGODI
DZACH

THE PERFECT TEEN



Don't get it twisted, Zimbabwe has one of the most popping hip hop scenes on the continent. Yes, news headlines referencing the copper capital usually involve witty shots taken at their seemingly immortal president or some sensationalised BBC reaction to their foreign policy. What they don't tell you is that firstly, Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate of any country on this continent, and secondly, (shouldn't be surprising considering the previous fact) the line of talented songwriters and artists there spans longer the Mugabe's presidential term. Among these artists is one of Zimbabwe's current faces of hip hop, Bulawayo emcee Tehn Diamond, who is carving his name into greatness one hit at a time. Hungry, inspired and hella busy lately, HYPE caught up with him right as he stepped off stage from his City of Kings performance alongside respected producer and artist, and close collaborator, Take Fizzo.

So firstly, I've always wondered, why the name 'Tehn Diamond'?

My birth given name is Tendai, which means 'give thanks' in Shona. The name Tehn Diamond means 'give thanks and shine'. The philosophy behind that combination being that anything we can see in our minds we can be in our lives. I sincerely believe that, so it permeates my approach to everything really.

Being part of what many would consider the new wave of Zim artists, what would you say is the current state of hip hop in Zimbabwe?

I'd like to think we're in a really special place right now. I remember in 2008 when I first came onto the scene, having spent the last five years in Australia. The underground scene was buzzing but on radio we were nowhere to be heard and we hadn't yet begun to organise ourselves. Fast forward to right now, and I believe we're on the cusp of actually making this art we love so much while also acquiring the almighty dollar at the same time.

We're definitely still in a growing space but for the long way that I know we still have ahead we've definitely improved. It's incredible, the young energy coming up right now is just inspiring. I believe without a doubt that hip hop is the fastest growing genre in the country. And if we just continue to be more mindful of ourselves as actual brands and businesses we're gonna be fine.

What does the Brian Soko Grammy win mean for Zimbabwe from a production point of view? We're talking about a guy from right around your area who went on to produce for Beyoncé and also our very own Cassper Nyovest on 'Phumakim' ... Must be mind-blowing.

That Grammy just poured gasoline on the fires of the very dream Fizzo and I have been harbouring for years now. In fact, we promised each other that we'd go out there and work our a*s off to get ourselves one of them shiny gold statues. So for Brian Soko to actually step up and prove that it can be done, and prove that our dreams are valid and to prove that Zimbabweans have what it takes to star on that international stage, it's powerful stuff. Truly inspiring!

What is the game plan for the rest of 2015?

The goal is simple: we want to make the money make sense; we want to penetrate the regional market and accomplish selling out the Harare International Conference Centre for Hip Hop, a feat that's never been done before. So the grind is more real this year than it's ever been before, and I love it.

Those are pretty big goals. How do you plan to achieve this?

I'm working on my debut commercial release, *The Perfect Tehn*, which I'm hoping to release some time in the second quarter of this year. Naturally I've got co-executive Take Fizzo producing the project with the legend Begottensun, and we're so close to being done with it though, just need to clear a sample or two and lock down some of my dream features. If all goes according to plan, 2015 should be a year to remember. I mean, I've been waiting my whole life to release an album so this is a huge moment for me. For us really, I've got the most passionate and driven team around me right now, so the vibe feels right for success with this one.

What does hip hop mean to you?

Hip hop is freedom, and that's the feeling I've felt most strongly throughout my journey in hip hop. Free to create entire worlds with these words and the music they come to life on. Free to be me with no apologies. Free to express and try to understand this life and this world better. Hip hop is actually just life. ☒

**"THE GOAL IS SIMPLE:
WE WANT TO MAKE THE MONEY MAKE SENSE"**

JJI F LESOTHO

After years of what seemed like inactivity, Lesotho emcee Jji F has emerged from the ashes with the hope of putting his nation on his back and dominating the continent. As one of the leading names in the Lesotho hip hop scene, the Maseru emcee kicked it with **HYPE** to discuss lyricism vs sales, his album *Maloti Green Capital*, as well as why Africa needs to start paying attention to his country.

You emerged on the hip hop scene back in 2010 and your single ‘I miss you’ gained a lot of spins on radio. Why did it take you more than three years to release your debut album?
It actually took me four years to release an album here. I have been experimenting with sounds trying to find my place and where I really fit, unlike many artists who just get into something without trying to perfect it. Plus in Lesotho, the tradition of buying music was never a regular practice. So I guess I was testing the market, but I’m satisfied with the results so far. The album took me two years to fully record and I’ve been releasing singles which have put me out there in the meantime. So I’d say the album was right on time.

Being from Lesotho, where there are unique challenges and the culture is still finding its feet, how do you think you fare against other cats on the continent?

Rappers nowadays are too hard-headed and cocky toward their audience. I believe as rappers we are puppets to our audience, we entertain people and if they don’t want to hear about certain things or topics, I feel no need to bring them up. I am different to all these other rappers because I understand that entertainment is for the people. So I try to deliver what people want to hear.

That’s an interesting viewpoint. So the album is finally out. Give us some insight into *Maloti Green Capital*.

I mostly worked with artists from Lesotho, like L Tore, T Mech, Shuffle 44, S Jizzle and Kopano, just to name a few, and from SA I only featured one guy who I thought was really talented and knows how to pass a message on. He goes by the name of Sub-V. The album has a lot of party songs because the reality is that people party as a form of escapism from reality and I want to

create the theme music for those experiences. The album also discusses problems we face as Lesotho rappers with the government and big companies that sometimes don’t take our artistry seriously.

Tell us about the hip hop scene in Lesotho.

The hip hop scene in Lesotho is very promising; people have suddenly got so much interest in what is happening with us as rappers and really support the music. Competition is really high although there aren’t a lot of rappers who are really making news or have massive commercial buzz. I’m one of the lucky few. Sometimes the hip hop scene down here is sad because dudes like copying what other people are doing and don’t understand why they don’t blow up. If only they understood that we don’t need to be the same, a magician seldom does the same trick twice because it is not as exciting the second time.

In a recent interview you were quoted saying, “Artists should make money to live, and not just to survive.” Can you expand on that statement?

When I said that, I meant it’s about time we as artists in Lesotho make money that one can actually live off and have a family because it’s a shame what is happening here; we don’t get royalties for our music. We only make money with performances and selling CDs. That was a wake-up call to the government because I really feel they have neglected us as a very valuable and influential group of citizens in the country. I really hope they wake up and stop sleeping on us. The government seems to be playing absolutely no role in uplifting arts in the country; I even wonder sometimes why they have a department of arts and culture. I believe it’s part of the reasons our country is in such a mess.

VERBALZ: NDIMAKAZI MABALA // VISUALZ: TSEPO MOHLAKAANA

TWITTER: @IMSOJJIF
FACEBOOK: JJI F

There is a notion that lyricism in hip hop is slowly diminishing because music created for instantaneous enjoyment seems to get greater responses from the public. What's your take on this subject?

I believe hip hop is like a baby and it will keep changing and going through phases. Right now I think people are more into partying, so the lyrics get dumbed down a lot. I know this from experience because when I'm out partying I hardly ever concentrate on the lyrics of the song if they are too complex. I can engage and sing along better if the lyrics are simple but delivered well on a nice instrumental. So I don't mind people like Rae Sremmurd, Yung Thug and the like. In fact, I actually listen to them. But lyricism is still important because a message needs to be passed. I think it's just a matter of keeping the balance.

Speech impediments can be debilitating to one's self-confidence. How has rapping helped you to overcome your stuttering?

I stutter a lot when I speak, especially when I'm nervous, but funny enough, I never stutter when I rap. But the stuttering is part of my life and I've learned to work with it. I only stutter when I speak Sotho, so I switch languages once I feel it coming [laughs]. ☐





LEARNING THE FACTZ

Make no mistake, there are levels to this rap thing. You get rappers, and you get emcees. And then every couple of decades, if we're lucky, we witness a freak of nature. An artist in the truest sense, whose music is their canvas and whose words are their paint. A wordsmith whose product transcends even the medium they use to communicate with their audience. Not just existing, but able to excel in the different tiers of rap and really live the life.

- *In a group with Lupe Fiasco, The Cool Kids, Blu, Asher Roth, Pharrell Williams, B.o.B, Wale, J Cole and Charles Hamilton: ✓*
- *Put Drake on a song before he popped: ✓*
- *Worked with Erykah Badu: ✓*
- *Featured on a XXL Freshman of the Year cover: ✓*
- *Toured the world: ✓*
- *Certified by Diddy: ✓*
- *Earned his stripes in the battle rap scene: ✓*
- *Scored an international commercial for Honda Motors: ✓*

All the way from the Bronx in New York, we spoke to one of the most quietly underrated rappers of the past 10 years, Mickey Factz. If you don't know, you better ask somebody.

So much has gone down since you catapulted onto the scene. Our earliest awareness of you was the XXL Freshman cover because we used to get the magazine here. You speak about it occasionally ('\$4.14'), but how did things with Jive and all the hype that was around you deteriorate to the situation that you describe in '\$4.14'?

Well from the beginning, 2010 is when I signed with Jive/Battery Records and then you know they picked up maybe nine tracks we recorded

previously. Then six extra tracks for the album. We put 'Paradise' out and then *I'm Better Than You* was supposed to be hosted by DJ Drama. Instead they went with DJ Enuff. Shout to Enuff. After that, we were trying to put out 'We Young' with Roscoe Dash. That didn't go down. I then went on tour with Big Sean. 2011 came and I did the song with Marsha Ambrosius. She jumped on 'For The Culture' and that was the single for 2011. The sad part about that was Jive had folded and I got moved to RCA. I was dealing with a different A&R as opposed to who I was usually dealing with. That's when I started to create *Mickey MauSe* at that point. I sent it to Lupe and he wanted it to be the album. Called the label to get him to executive produce the album but they didn't want to do that. So I left the label.

Speak on your relationship with Lupe Fiasco please. He's spoken very highly of you on a number of occasions and even invited you on tour with him last year.

Well, that's the big homie. We talk. Met years ago in Japan while on tour and it's always been mutual admiration for each other's work. We support each other. And that's really it. He loves my lyricism and vice versa. We have a common respect and mutual appreciation for each other. Haven't recorded anything together yet so I just



let it flow. It may never happen. But for me I'm happy we rock how we rock regardless.

Okay, so I know you get asked this all the time, but I have to try my luck too. All City Chess Club was a great idea. Loaded with talent, I feel like if you guys were to come together you could be UNSTOPPABLE. How did that relationship even begin and are there any songs that might have been recorded that we never got to hear?

Well ACCC should be as big as MMG, YMCMB and Good Music. But egos got in the way. Lupe started it with the 'I'm Beaming' remix. I joined later on. Lupe mentioned me on 'SLR' and then he tweeted I was in it. In 2013 when Lu and I were really hanging, he put me in charge after just being tired of trying to reach everyone. I got to Asher, Diggy, B.o.B and Blu. That was it. And even they took forever. If Pharrell were more involved it would have happened.

Hope it somehow pans out. Now, your highly listened-to response to Kendrick's 'Control' verse was quite vicious, but it was expected considering that cats from NY are very proud and territorial about their rap heritage. I spoke to Nas last year and he said though NY history can't ever be taken lightly, right

now music is universal and it should be about making great music as opposed to territories and regions. What's your take on that?

I've always been a global artist in terms of music making. Most people don't even know I'm from the Bronx. They think Chicago or L.A. Which is good so I don't get boxed in. It should be about great music instead of territories, but it won't ever be that way.

Is the sequel to *Mickey MauSe* complete? If I'm not mistaken, last year you announced a release date for it. Must admit, I wasn't completely sold on the idea of a sequel because it's a really high standard to try to match.

No, it's not complete. It will be released on Christmas. Creating a sequel to *MauSe*, which is titled *Mau2e*, is no easy task. The production is picked out. I'm just working on finishing the production and crafting the story to match the flow of the album. I am not worried about it lyrically. I feel I've gotten better from 2012. The plot is absolutely amazing and it actually takes storytelling to another level from the original. I'm not worried about the project. The only small worry I have is creating another 'Taking Pictures of Girls Naked'. It had a grime/dubsteppy sound to it. Finding a track to do that will be difficult, but I'm up for it. Aside from that, I'm not worried at all.

Last we heard, *The Achievement* was on its way and it features Yelawolf, Badu, Marsha and others. Is there any progress?

The Achievement has had so many different features and so many different songs. I don't know what is going to happen with this version of the album. I don't know if I want it to be very hip hop-ish like Blu's *Below the Heavens* or have it experimental like *Heavens Fallout* or have it just mainstream. I don't know. I really seriously don't know what direction I'm going to take with *The Achievement* this time around, but I know it will hopefully be dropping this year. My fans keep me going. Without them I would not be rapping, seriously. They just keep me going. That's the only thing that does it because they need my lyricism. They need my words, they need my inspiring truths. Because of that I continue to press forward.

Your approach to music is very different. You are heavily influenced by (fine) artists and the way you express it in your music is amazing. It's interesting because for a long time art was seen as a bourgie activity for the wealthy and elegant, when really a lot of US (and African) art has its roots in the streets. Well, I always felt that art was synonymous with music. It just wasn't accepted. Now everyone loves art and graffiti. I try to educate as much as I can. My knowledge is limited in terms of what people may know, but being able to rap about it and it not be contrived is a blessing in itself. I was called pretentious and snobby for rapping about art. But Jay gets praised for it [laughs]. Way of the game I guess.

Random question I've always wanted to ask you, just because I've played the scenario in my head over and over again: do you think you could out-rap Eminem in his prime?

I don't know. I'd try. In his prime, he was really, really good. I would have loved to have



tried. I probably would have succumbed to a loss though.

It's always really interesting to find out from great writers what their writing process is like. Are you an off-the-top kind of person when creating songs or do you still kick it old school with the pen?

I want to say that when it comes to my writing process I would liken it to me getting an instrumental and then sitting with the instrumental. I like letting it soak in for a couple of days and then proceeding to let whatever comes to my mind appear on the track. If I'm doing a feature for someone I can typically write that out in like 10 to 15 minutes depending on subject matter.

How do you feel about the state of rap music in general? Sometimes I think it's saddening because a lot of the content is so senseless, but other times I think that it's merely a result of freedom. Back in the day people rapped and you could hear the emotions of desperation, struggle and hardness, hunger, joy and other emotions because their lives really reflected that. Now, it's like if you're born in 1992 and your life has been nothing but smooth, wouldn't it be fake to be rapping about 'hard sh*t'? 'Cause technically, your experience of reality is different from the past generation. Well, it varies. In the '90s, we had different types of hip hop. There was a balance. The radio would play all types of different songs and styles of hip hop. Now it is basically a commercialised business for anyone who wants to make money. In 1992, there were all types. There is no filter anymore. Only specific sounding records can be manifested and put out there.

From epic battles to building with guys like Diddy, making songs with Drake and performing overseas with The Cool Kids, you've already experienced so much in your few years. Which moment(s) would you consider to be the highlight of your career so far?

Doing a Honda commercial, XXL cover, travelling the world, recording with Grammy-winning artists and inspiring so many people.

Top five greatest hip hop albums. Think about this one very carefully.

Well for me, *Ready To Die*, *Blueprint*, *Illmatic*, *The Cool*, *Long Live The Kane*.

Where to for Mickey Factz from here?

Legacy and hope. That's what *Mau2e* is about and that's what Factz is about. *MauSe* has always been a direct reflection of my life. Art imitates life, so shall I imitate the canvas. ☹

TWITTER: @MICKEYFACTZ
INSTAGRAM: @MICKEYFACTZ



REZZID E

Thanks to Reason the East Rand is not short of victories lately. But it turns out that prolific lyricism and insomnia aren't the only things popping over there. Yup, it gets better. In short: she's bad. And by bad, we mean good. Really really good. But bad. Giving the phrase 'Thick as Snicker' new meaning, say hello to the notorious model and video vixen, Bongi Monareng AKA Bada*s.

bunch of roses with the quote: "With pain comes strength; with strength comes peace." It also has my grandmother's name in the middle.

Apart from tats, what would you say is your guilty pleasure?

Definitely piercings! I've got eight on my left ear and a nipple ring. [Laughs]

What do you do to keep your body so uhm ... bad?

Not too much. I take kickboxing classes three to four times a week and also occasionally take jogs around my neighbourhood.

If there was a raunchy genie whose job it was to grant dirty fantasies, what would you ask him for?

Hmmmm. I would love to be locked up in a room with Wiz kid for 24 hours.

When you're not making male heads turn, what does Bongi like to get up to?

I love to dance ... Well, I should actually say 'twerk', to be specific. I can twerk all day, every day. I actually suffer from the twerk syndrome.

We hope they never find an antidote for that syndrome. We imagine with all that twerking going on, you attract some pretty attention. What's the craziest thing a guy has done to get your attention?

OKAY. SO YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE A THING FOR tattoos. What is it about getting inked that does it for you?

It's a way of expressing myself to the world, I guess. My body is my journal and my tattoos are my story. But overall I really appreciate the artistry of it all.

Well we applaud the author. How many tats do you have and what are they?

I have two [BIG] tattoos but I'm definitely planning on getting a lot more. The first is 15 stars that go up from my hip to my belly. And the other one is of a

IDENT EVIL

A guy once offered me R10,000 to go home with him. Needless to say, it didn't happen.

Wow! What would you say is the sexiest thing about you?

My a*s and thighs.

What is the sexiest thing in a man for you?

Firstly, a man with lots of tattoos is the ultimate turn-on. He must have a great body and a good sense of style too.

Pet peeve?

Gold teeth and carvelas.

Speaking about pets, are you a pet person?

No not really, but I would love to own one of those miniature dogs that stay as small as puppies forever. Not sure of the breed but I think they're cute.

Are you a kicks and hoodies kind of girl or more a heels and freakem dress kind of girl?

More like a booty shorts and kicks kinda girl.

Drake or Kendrick Lamar?

Drake

AKA or Da L.e.s?

Reason ☒

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"YOU KNOW WHAT IS ALSO HARMFUL TO CHILDREN WHEN NOT REGULATED? CHOCOLATE. AND OBESITY-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS HAVE CERTAINLY DIRECTLY CAUSED FAR MORE DEATHS THAN MARIJUANA HAS, IF ANY"

UP IN SMOKE

HIGH SOCIETY

Weed, Mary Jane, reefer, kush, green, jets, zol ... Call it whatever you like, but what's definite is the presence that the herb has had in rap and street music from as far back as anyone can remember. From Dre's *Chronic* and Wiz Khalifa's *KK* to our own Brown Dash's 'Puff & Pass' and Da L.E.S.' 'Heaven', the green dragon has certainly inspired a lot of content in popular music.

WHETHER THE SUBSTANCE SHOULD BE legalised or not has always been a controversial topic and continues to divide public opinion all over the world. There are many schools of thought that provide varying arguments in the fields of science, economics, government, morality and religion. A few include the age-old argument that marijuana is, by scientific definition, a drug, with possible harmful effects such as cancer, stunting of growth in younger people, throat infections and the like.

When Atlanta rapper 2 Chainz went onto HLN to discuss the matter with famous talk show host and reporter Nancy Grace, things got very interesting. Of course Grace took the anti-legalisation stance, starting off the interview by praising Chainz for his above average academic record and university education. Then she quickly turned to suggest that it was hypocritical of Chainz to promote the use of marijuana, being such an intelligent person and also the parent of two daughters. Then of course the rap community was indirectly sullied by a video montage that included clips from a 2 Chainz video (showing strippers and money) followed by footage of infants handling joints given to them by their parents. Grace also went on to quote random lyrics and dropped a few

of the expected stereotypical 'we-know-the-use-of-weed-is-a-universal-problem-but-we're-going-to-put-this-on-the-hip-hop-industry-cos-it's-easier' comments to liven the argument.

Personally, I wouldn't trust 2 Chainz with an activity as menial as cutting my grass. One: because I don't have grass, I live in an apartment. But more importantly; two: because though his lyrics are entertaining at times, I question the mental dexterity of a person who can write down "I hope you get testicular cancer in the brain" and proceed to drive to studio, record it, and allow it to be released. But I must admit, 2 Chainz held his own, replying calmly and keeping his cool throughout the interview while Nancy Grace tried to pin all of the world's problems on weed.

The first thing that got my attention was the 'Pot to blame?' slug that was splurged on the screen during the footage of the infants smoking weed. Anyone with two brain cells, as 2 Chainz subtly pointed out, will agree that an adult giving a child weed or any drug or sedative has nothing to do with the substance and everything to do with the deranged person who would allow something like that.

A parent who will dispense weed is also likely to do other reckless things like physically

abuse their child, starve them, destroy their self-esteem or neglect them, or any number of things really. You know what else is dangerous for infants and children when not regulated? Chocolate. And paper. And scissors. And butterflies. And rainbows. Yes, everything. Everything on this damned earth is a potential danger to an impressionable and inquisitive mind. The point is that such an action is more proof of irresponsible parenting and obscure judgment than it is a statement about the accessibility or dangers of weed. Nancy's shock tactics were a very poor attempt at trying to make someone who enjoys a puff here and there take responsibility for child abuse.

Secondly, "if this is legalised, everybody is going to have unlimited access to pot." No Nancy, that's not the way it works. There are two levels that this statement aims to patronise people on. The first is that it overlooks the element of personal responsibility. Alcohol is a drug that is legally available to the public. Yes, there are those who abuse it, but there are also those who understand moderation. The same statement can be applied about hotdogs (or any other thing people consume) because everything is bad for you if it is not done in moderation. This is something that people intuitively understand, even if they choose to ignore it in some cases. In addition to that, every freedom/right is accompanied with a responsibility, which the government is obligated to communicate as soon as they make any service/product available for public use. That is to say, if weed was made legal, the relevant education about its use would be made available along with the product.

Thirdly, again as 2 Chainz pointed out (he's starting to look smarter now, isn't he?), like in South Africa, marijuana in the States is already very accessible; and not just the medicinal kind. People have been blazing away for years and the reality is that it's not about to stop any time soon. Fighting it will get us nowhere, but legalising the leaf on the other hand allows the government to manage and regulate its distribution by making it a taxable practice.

What happens in that instance is that firstly, it limits the dangers that a 'black market' presents, where dealers are known to add unnatural and potentially dangerous substances to the herb. Licensed buyers and sellers would be bound to certain regulations, as with any store or retail outlet in the world that sells any product. Secondly, with the amount of already existing stoners, the government will get a tax cut on every purchase, meaning that money made from weed sales goes back into helping to build the country. That was a crazy thought until 22 states in the USA did it and didn't turn out to be such an insane idea.

Up in smoke? Yes, but also up in randelas.

BE LEGALISED?

FLIGHT RISK ALERT

According to 2 Chainz, who has suddenly become a poster boy for legalising marijuana following his interview with reporter Nancy Grace, "It's got a calming effect, particularly in the world of rap, where performing at sold-out affairs is a weekly staple, nerves flying through the roof, the high expectation to deliver every time. Marijuana gives you an ability to handle the kind of pressure that can cripple a man."

But let's put the countless puns about 'puffing green' and 'Mary Jane' on hold for a while. Let's chill with the cool cinematic slow-motion smoke blown into the camera lens for a minute; separate the image of your favourite rapper covered in a cloud of rising glory while stepping out of his Lambo. Let's press 'cancel' on those senseless Instagram memes with attractive girls in underwear rolling blunts for their boyfriends. I mean, Tupac was cremated and his ashes were mixed into a blunt and smoked by his Outlawz members. How bada*s is that? I get it. But let's halt all of that for a few minutes and look at this beyond the smoke and mirrors.

Weed is marijuana, a drug that comes from the leaves and flowers of a plant. (The plant is also called marijuana.) In the US, marijuana is usually sold in the form of leaves and buds. In Europe, a different form of marijuana is more common. It is called 'hashish' and is made from a sticky substance that comes from the plant. In South Africa, cannabis is more widely available.

But why has weed been such an integral part of hip hop when there are clearly so many forces working against it? We all know that rap and weed have almost gone hand-in-hand for a long, long time. Snoop is one of the originators when it comes to spitting about weed and is constantly talking about that Cali-grown bud. More recently, Wiz Khalifa and his fellow deep smokers like Method Man, Cypress Hill and Devin the Dude hold the torch, depending on who you ask. Marijuana is everywhere in hip hop. Whether it's mentioned on the radio, seen in music videos or smuggled into concerts, marijuana is pretty much unavoidable in the genre.

The club of the non-weed-smoking rappers is pretty extraordinary actually. Kendrick Lamar, an (unofficial) advocate of clean living and sobriety, is an impeccable artist and lyricist. But more than that, he is an incredible model for what can happen when one sheds the facades connected with notoriety in rap music. That is to say in many cases, in the context of street and urban culture, weed is not a substance problem – it's a cultural one. We are not dependent on the drug but addicted to the false sense of depth, creativity, intelligence

"TUPAC WAS CREMATED AND HIS ASHES WERE MIXED INTO A BLUNT AND SMOKED BY HIS OUTLAWZ MEMBERS. HOW BADA*S IS THAT?"

and glory that many rapping weed-smokers in the past built it up to be. The imagery painted when referencing the green substance is always connected to superior thinking or values of some sort. It doesn't help that the colloquial term for being intoxicated is the word 'high', which has created an opportunity for every lame rapper who ever existed to come up with an even lamer pun, comparing height or altitude to figurative 'highs'.

The reality is that in the '70s and '80s, when hip hop culture found itself and started to win over the hearts of the people, there was a morbid drug epidemic that existed, particularly on both coasts, where shipments could be brought into the country. There are many conspiracy theories around America's intentional injection of the drugs during the Reagan era, but we won't get into that. The point is the two most commonly used drugs during the era that our culture developed its identity in were cocaine and weed. And that is the reason that from as early as Ice T, Run DMC and MC Search, rap lyrics and imagery have been plastered with the plant references, whether positive or negative. If "hip hop is an expression of our surroundings," as KRS-One suggests, then it follows logic that music from that era would contain this subject. But that was one of the many struggles of that generation. And though socio-political generational issues don't disappear as time moves on, we need to realise that our challenges are different to theirs. We need not continue glorifying a substance that is clearly still being held in high esteem for the wrong reasons.

Also, if weed had such celestial effects on creativity, how do we explain Afroman? If so many other smoke-blowing emcees who came before and couldn't articulate their words didn't make you want to completely stay away from the stuff, the prospect of ending up like Afroman should've done the trick, right? The truth is for every amazing weed-smoking rapper who exists, there is also a sober one. Kendrick, Pharrell, Andre 3000, Eminem, 50 Cent, Tyler the Creator, Lupe Fiasco, and even Jay-Z who's occasionally touched on his personal disdain for the effects of the substance, are some of our generation's most creative and influential minds. Granted they probably have their vices, everyone does. But there is a darker underlying social crutch that weed, in particular, brings with it.

The problem with making such a substance legal is that it is too dangerous to be readily available for the regular man. But what about your freedom to pursue your private endeavours, right? Well boohoo. History has shown us that free will always need to be

regulated, and even in some cases, vetoed. If humans could be trusted to use their freedom responsibly, we wouldn't need the government to step in and tell us not to kill one another or not to drink and drive or not to cross the road when the traffic light is red. The existence of all these regulations and structures is proof that sometimes the government needs to step in and make the best decision for its people, especially the vulnerable members of society and the youth, who need to be protected and can't always be trusted to use their judgment in volatile situations. Even if that decision is an unpopular one. When you consider that the youth makes up the majority of the world's population and it could be your younger sibling or child involved in a dangerous situation, even by association, it makes no sense to risk commercialising this vile substance.

Lastly, many modern/liberal governments already spend millions in currency on social responsibility and prevention concerned with drugs like alcohol and nicotine (which are legal). How much more of the world's resources will be wasted trying to rectify the effects of a drug with triple the potency?

The reality is, as human beings, we're a failed species. Yes, I said it. Blessed with divine awareness and dominion over the planet and all its residents and nature, but unable to live up to the intellectual and emotional potential needed to keep it sacred. So is restricting the right to smoke a plant-based drug a violation of our freedom? In theory, yes. But given the fact that we already suffer from the inability to keep alcohol away from children, the fatal accidents every day, the broken homes, the killings, we cannot afford to make the same mistake with marijuana. The wellbeing of the many outweighs the wants of the few. So until the day our species collectively has a miraculous awakening and can manage our issues, the dream of some to legalise marijuana should go up in smoke.

YOUR RIGHT TO GET HIGH IS DENIED. ☒



WIZ KHA THE MODERN HIP HOP MAN





VISUALZ: GALLO IMAGES/SOURCEGLOBE // VERBALZ: YONELA DIKO X SPACEBOY P

WIZ KHALIFA

It's 2010 and the whole world is looking for rebirth. A change of sort, from a crippling crisis that had us questioning everything, including this thing of ours; the culture we had created: hip hop. Coming off what was effectively the decline of gangsta rap after Game's first album, and existing in a tug of war of values between lanes: the bulletproof, emotionless emcee on one hand and the emerging R&B-inspired rapper on the other extreme, commercial hip hop needed new ambassadors. Or least an alternative profile to choose from. And more importantly, the world needed to smile again.

WE WERE BETTER THAN THIS MESS. WE HAD lost the ability to celebrate little successes; we had left our people at the door and locked it behind us. In the first real era to exist after the originators, the game was in limbo and the kids desperately searching for a voice they could relate to.

In that moment of haze, something was brewing in the second biggest city of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, and like a prophet in the wilderness, Pittsburgh's young son, Wiz Khalifa, was recreating the world we had lost. His ability to paint that so vividly in his breakout song 'Black and Yellow' gave him a national and worldwide platform almost immediately. And from there he would take us on the path we should have taken from the very start.

Rolling Papers, Wiz's third studio album, his debut to the world stage, released 29 March 2011, would be declared by music writers as a pop-rap album. That would begin a revolution of pop-rap music that would define half a decade.

Many artists never understand the burden of defining a new era, of being a game changer: the necessity to cut the umbilical cord from the old, even when the old still looms large and can give you a firm ground to lean on. And this is perhaps why it took such a long time for Cameron Thomaz to make sense to the music world. Wiz understood the importance of breaking out and standing alone; beyond just being a rapper, but as an individual. The music would just be an organic expression of his unique perspective on life. When Wiz became the centre of a bidding war between various labels, including Rick Ross' Maybach Music Group label, he turned all the offers down. When Drake offered him the chance to co-headline his album tour, something that would not only have made him very rich, but also lift the attention to his name and brand to new heights, he also turned that down.

Of course right after that, he would release his first official single 'Black and Yellow', produced by Stargate, without any lingering shadow of a co-sign. This became one of the highest-selling hip hop singles of 2010, eventually selling over two million digital downloads. Knowing that he was too different to come up under a brand that was already successful and suffer the risk of forever being a footnote in another artist's story, Wiz was determined to carve out a space of his own. So without having to compromise his sound to fit into whatever format a supporting record label would offer, with his 'Black & Yellow' and its visuals, a new star was born and was ushering in a new era.

It was, however, his second single 'Roll Up' which really painted the new rapper that Wiz Khalifa was and the new rap world he was creating. It was a song of male strength, it was a love song, it was a commitment song. Here was a rapper completing himself without the shame of appearing weak, because his angle sharply defied the 'money over b*tches' motto that defines a lot of the attitude towards romantic commitment in the commercial rap world. "I'll be there girl whenever you call me; whenever you need me; don't care what your friends say, 'cause they don't know me. I can be your best friend." The lyrics could have been straight from a Luther Vandross song. Though not a revolutionary premise for a single or even a rapper (in history LL Cool J, Kanye, Drake and others established a pop star-esque likability because of their ability to tug on the heart strings of the more gentle listener), and hardly a classic, it spoke more to the fact that a rapper covered in tattoos and plastered with all the hip hop stereotypes was offering a lane different to the ones previous rappers who looked like him had established. We're not talking Drake, whose 'weird' and uncharacteristic idiosyncrasies hip hop eventually accommodated because he was Jewish and so was eventually allowed to be 'alternative'. We're not talking about Wiz's fellow hometown resident, Mac Miller, whose sound challenged convention and we accepted and embraced it, because well, he was white. It's a much tougher task to be different when there are limited precedents for your 'type'.



This is exactly what Wiz Khalifa did with his personal life. When he met Amber Rose, the now estranged mother of his son, he rolled up. Following as he was, and inevitably competing with Amber's ex, the larger than life Kanye West, he was the butt of many 'second-hand goods' jokes and again p'ssed on the unspoken rap code of never marrying young, especially not in one's prime. As a man of his word, who refused to play that game, Wiz and Amber tied the knot in 2012. A year and two months later, Amber filed for divorce and was also asking for full custody of the couple's one-year-old son, Sebastian Taylor Thomaz.

Divorce is a sad reality for anyone, even more so for a rapper who's influenced the wave of young, progressive hip hop artists so intensely. Being a publicly affectionate father who occasionally has breakdowns (as most people do), Wiz and a few other young rap dads are making it more okay to realise that family and responsibility are not mutually exclusive with hip hop. The fact that this is an accepted part of the rap dialogue in 2015 is proof of progressive

thinking in the culture. Mind you, there was a time where any hint of humanness connected to these hardcore figures we'd hero-worshipped would completely shatter the persona.

"I always kept my views on family and stability clear and stood by them just as I do anything else I feel strongly about," Wiz took to Twitter this February in response to bad publicity from his split with his wife. "I'm even at a point where I feel I have no other options and I just need some help. As young black men, we are always quick to say 'we got this' as soon as our loved ones need us. But who got us? Standing up for all fathers who need, deserve, or can't find help."

Even at his most vulnerable point, Wiz Khalifa still knows that he represents a group of young men who wanted to redefine a hip hop man. And if he must be the lamb who was slain, or if he must be accused of being a wimp for caring, let it be.

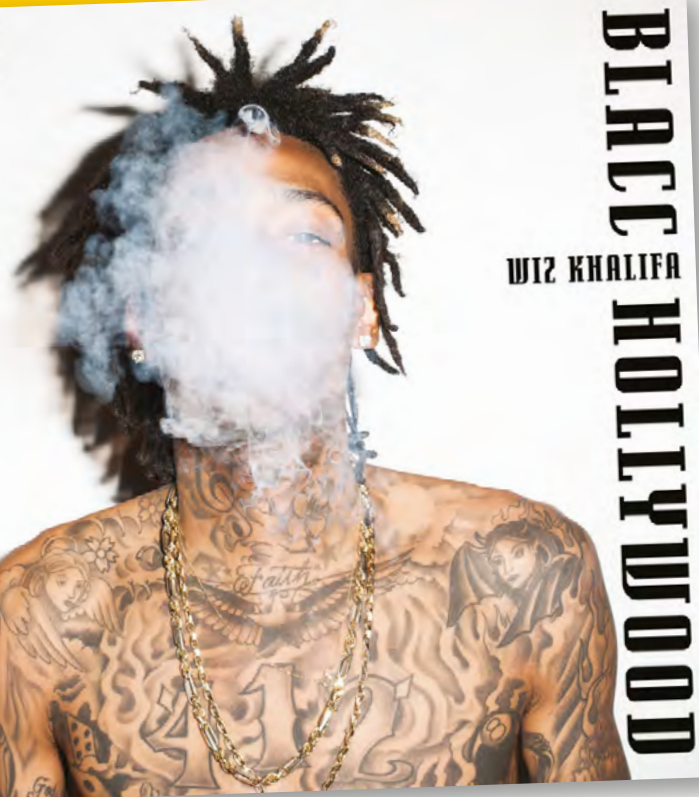
PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

You can be anything you want
Just keep going, going, gone, gone, gone
It don't stop here n*gga

Back when I was young I had dreams of getting
richer
Then my homie Breeze set me down schooled me
to the picture
I was with some wild n*ggas put me on the game
Told me if you tryin' to make your move you
gotta know your lane homie
All you got are your name and your word so
never break it
For this life you pay a price you get a chance you
gotta take it
'Cause most n*ggas never make it they stranded
where I'm from
Ain't no conversation all they understand is get
a gun
I was riding in my Bonneville hoping I could
make it
Out selling Ps and smoking weed avoiding police
right up the street
Way back in the day before I had all of this paper
Before I had all of these diamonds, before I had
all of these haters

Now I remember when, I seen it and to me it was
stuntin'
I remember when, I bought it I ain't needed or
nothing
Always in a different state so now they label me
a goner
I ain't come up out of nowhere I'm from straight
up off the corner
Now everywhere we go, they probably know my
name 'cause I been there
Now everywhere we go, they said how much I
spend when I'm in there
And I'm throwing up my money for the ones who
never made it
Sayin' f*ck the ones who hated, roll one up and
celebrate it

'Medicated' – Wiz Khalifa



REBEL WITH A CAUSE

What is equally as impressive (or even more) is that Wiz is able to be this man while simultaneously embodying the carefree spirit that young guns live their life with. The same spirit that sparked his contagious youth anthem 'Young, Wild and Free' with Snoop Dogg and has been the theme music to different forms of free expression in every corner of the globe. The same spirit that affirms through his tattoos, ever-changing hair colour, lack of respect for narrow-minded dictated authority, and tendency to spark up at any given moment, that we owe it to ourselves to exercise the freedom to be who we want to be.

Often accused in the media of being a walking contradiction for being a weed-smoking rockstar who is also a father and provider, Wiz always has been the subject of much criticism. However, one could argue that who isn't a walking contradiction of righteousness and ratchetness, trying to navigate a way through life? The only difference is that Khalifa offers both sides of the story where many rappers just offer one, whether the positive or negative. The truth is, the lowest common denominator between all people is this very human contradiction. Not skin colour or

class or social status or anything artificial. It is the fact that, especially in a post-governmentally oppressive world, we're all trying to figure out that balance between our freedoms and responsibilities that accompany them. And this is why, as a rapper, Wiz has been able to appeal to fans beyond the hip hop market, being one of the very few 'urban' artists today able to bridge that gap between rock and rap music. He's done that partially by shedding the stereotypes of what a rapper is supposed to be (bravado, notorious cop-killing 'hard' n*gga) and instead united everyone under a shared spirit of progression and defiance, while still bringing authenticity to the game.

Wiz Khalifa has been a force for good in hip hop, both as an artist and as a man. He has given us a body of work unrivalled by many artists of his age. Since the release of his debut album *Show and Prove*, he has since given us *Deal or No Deal*, his second album, a mixtape *Kush and Orange Juice*, and of course *Rolling Papers* which he followed with another album, *O.N.I.F.C.*, on 4 December 2012. Wiz released his fourth album *Blacc Hollywood*. All this while racking up a net worth of \$30 million.

Name another '80s baby with a catalog, message, set of values, work ethic and bank account like Wiz, and we'll show you ghost. ☒

This is not a mistake. You don't have a defective copy of the magazine. No, this is not a misprint and no, you are not going blind. This is a panoramic image of what the local hip hop industry looks like in 10 years from now. Black. Defunct. Non-existent. This is for all the so-called members and supporters of this community who claim to love the culture but who only contribute through complaints, Twitter memes and mouth service (see winning letter on page four).

We see you, and want you to know that you are the very thing that is stifling the progress of this. Not the music, not rappers, not merchandise. You. If you are a paying member of the local hip hop community, tweet or instagram this page using the hashtag #NoMouthService to show your support for the business of hip hop in Southern Africa and all those who contribute to its dopeness. We are hip hop. We are culture.

HYPE

bigger than hip hop

LOCAL



AFTA ROBOT

“NGIBLOME NEZIPHALAPHALA. PHAKATHI KWE CARACARA” – K.O

APRIL/MAY 2015



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HYPE

— bigger than hip hop —



MAGGZ & NOMUZI MABENA

VISUALZ: FLO MOKALE



ON THE DISC

Receiving more music than we know what to do with, we wouldn't want these joints to escape your listening pleasure. We therefore present you with the second instalment of *The Lost Tapes*. Selecting some of the hardest-working independent and emerging artists from every corner of the country, this is our pick of hottest tracks to infiltrate these streets.



1/BOOM BAP PLAY

– 2leestark & Honx feat. Dotcom. MVRCOxPOLO.
Produced by MVRCOxPOLO.



3/PHANDA MORE

– Siphoshothe Gift.
Produced by Siphoshothe Gift.



5/PUSHA

– Lolo Vandal.
Produced by Loyd.



2/NET DAAR

– 2Man'Cut feat. Anthony Mongwana. Eckho Alvarez.
Produced by Patmedic.



4/SIDOPE

– Stizz Taylor feat. Breeze. MX. P Dogg Amazing.
Produced by Stizz Taylor & Kalio.



6/AKANANYANI

– Bean n Pasco.
Produced by Nondira.



7/WE ON

– Family First Collective.
Produced by Zoocci.



11/TRAP STATE OF MIND

– T-AXXE, Jigger-Boi.
Produced by Ron Epidemic.



8/THE COME UP

– Tadoo Lefoko.
Produced by Tuxman.



12/WATCHING US

– Melo Dro.
Produced by Leezy Production.



15/MONATE

– Family First Collective.
Produced by Teezy.



9/WHERE I'M FROM

– Prince Infinite feat. Catalyst.
Produced by Reezzy.



13/PLAANI NE SPAANI

– Truey Donatello.
Produced by DJ Naydee.



16/THANK YOU NOTE

– 2Man'Cut feat. Howard.
Produced by Patmedic.



10/YOUNG INTERLUDE

– Sly Dynasty.
Produced by Al Tarba.



14/BEAUTY

– Daddy.
Produced by Oblique.



17/DAY DREAMS & FAIRYTALES

– Sickboi III.
Produced by Sickboi III.



RIKY RICK

FAMILY VALUES
MAKHADO MAKHADO

In boxing, the 'bolo punch' is essentially a long swinging uppercut. But because of the fact that such a long drawing action will obviously be spotted by your opponent before you land the blow (boxing is a very quick sport), the move capitalises on distraction. The back hand is dropped to give your opponent the impression that a heavy hook is coming up, while you use your lead hand to land the actual powerful blow. Where am I going with this? Oh yes, Riky drew us in with the singles. But while we were busy doing the Nae Nae to 'Boss Zonke', he dropped *Family Values* on us, which as an album is a hundred times more impactful than any jiggy material he has ever released.

Think about it. Unless your family's actual values at home are umswenko ('Boss Zonke'), defiance ('Nafukwa') and the acquisition of bad b*tches ('Amantombazane'), giving your album a title as intimate and morally grounding as *Family Values* after leading with the mentioned singles would definitely come off as misleading and unfocused. Riky Rick did mislead us. But on the contrary, the album is far from unfocused and actually delivers more depth than its name or the singles could have promised.

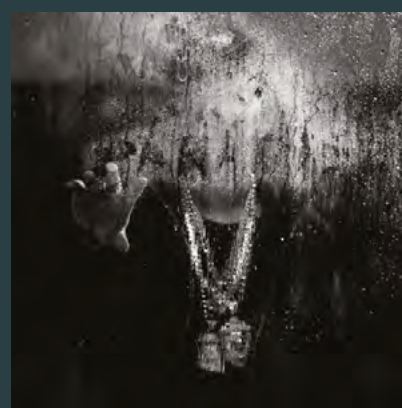
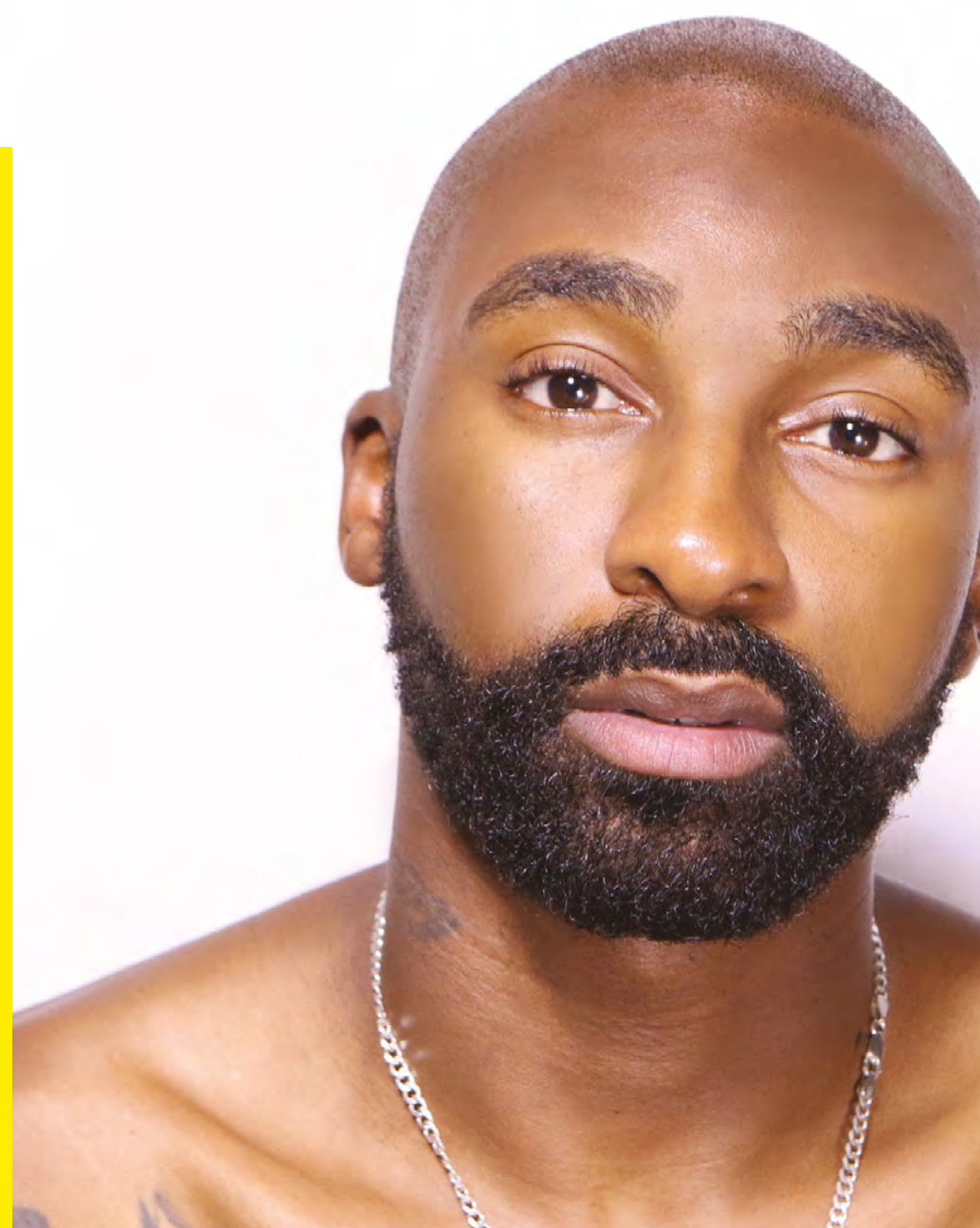
As soon as you press play, you are greeted with a bare and soulful instrumental, setting the tone for the journey beyond. 'A Time To Love', the first full-length song on the album, sums up Riky's general emotional sense. In fact, with the exception of the singles, as well as 'Come Alive' and 'Makaveli', *Family Values* is a coherent personal tale of tribulation and growth, breaking down the stereotypes that are associated with rappers and emotional catharsis.

'Gone', 'Till I Die' and 'Wonder Years' lend themselves nicely to the title, as Riky recollects countless anecdotes about platonic and family relationships from his childhood, from the passing of a family member to playing ball with homies from his neighbourhood. 'Papa Song', an uncomfortably graphic but relatable song addressing absent parenting, speaks of a hypothetical situation in which his real life former drug problem consumed him and he wasn't able to be there for his son's childhood. 'Bambela' (featuring Zano) addresses his relationship with his baby's mother, but thankfully not in the cheesy way that some love songs come off. One senses sincerity and can't help but want to share the same sentiments with a special girl.

And though Makhado pours his heart out on these records, when it's time to turn up, he really brings the heat, displaying a ridiculously accurate disposition when it comes to catering for the average radio listener, and proving that he is as diverse as he is creative. 'Come Alive' alone, a trap-inspired song featuring Okmalumkoolkat and Cassper Nyovest (the only rap features on the album), is worth buying the entire album for. A completely opposite direction from 'Slyza Tsotsi', which all three also collaborated on, the trio go bar for bar with flows that'll make your neck hairs wanna do the Taxi Driver dance. 'Makaveli' and '94' also see Riky flexing his street hit-making skills, for all the ouens from KwaMashu and beyond who need something to ride out to.

Of all the complexity on the album, the most amazing feat about *Family Values* is its production. For those who were familiar with Riky, this doesn't come as a surprise. A prolifically versatile composure able to easily switch from kwaito (Major Leagues 'The Business' and 'Slyza Tsotsi') to soulful ballads on his collaboration with Da L.E.S on *Last Summer*, and experimental and hip hop, *Family Values* challenges the entire current sonic environment and is sure to scoop up a couple of awards depending on the roll-out plan. Easily the best produced album thus far in the year. With his debut album, Rikhadho Makhado brings soul back to rap.

LYRICAL	4	PRODUCTION	5	DELIVERY	5
OVERALL					5/5



BIG SEAN

DARK SKY PARADISE
DEF JAM/G.O.O.D MUSIC

*Imagine stuck in the D and you're trying to find a way out
And yeah your music been bumping and you're just waiting to break out
I been waiting all g*d damn year
I can tell that it's near but near ain't here
Man, them bills is here right now
I guess you shine brightest when the lights down, like now
And then they say it happened for me overnight*

*Sh*t, yeah I guess
I guess it took 10 years for me to be an overnight success*

Big Sean's always had something about him. He's never been a terrible rapper but he's never been memorable either. Kind of like when you're at the drive-through at McDonald's at 2am in the morning and the attendant asks you over the intercom if you'd like fries and a drink with the burger you just ordered and you take a good few seconds to decide if you really need them or if you can do without them. Big Sean is the fries and the drink in this analogy: on a good day he is an incredible addition to the main feature, but you rarely think about him if he's not brought up by someone else. The boy from the D has always murdered guest verses ('Mercy', 'Clique', 'All Me', and so forth) but his own full-length albums have failed to leave an impact on the game beyond the one or two massive singles they produced. That was the old Big Sean. With *Dark Sky Paradise* he makes the transition to being the McFeast Deluxe with the XL fries and drink. (And



maybe even a few of those tomato sauce cups too.)

Misery clearly inspires great content in Big Sean's case. He always had a knack for creating successful fun singles like 'A*s' and 'My Last', but the few songs that carried with them a story, usually of pain or hunger, always hit 10 times harder. Admitting to *The Breakfast Club* during an interview in February that he suffered from anxiety for a long time after his second album due to the death of his grandmother and the split from his fiancée, the album begins just as hard and it is dark. One thing no one can ever take away from Sean, even in his fries and drink days, is his ability to come up with maybe the most creative flow patterns since Andre 3000 and Em. On the opening track, he spits incessantly from the first minute to the last in a way that gives you chills down your spine: fast, then faster, then slowly, then Sonic the Hedgehog fast, before ending it abruptly to give you a moment to take in what just happened.

Sean is consistent with his delivery throughout the album, coming out

on top against Drake in 'Blessings' and completely obliterating Lil Wayne without even trying in 'Deep'. Speaking of which, his choice of features on the rest of the album adds diversity to his sometimes flat sound. Kanye West drops in on 'All Your Fault' to deliver a great collaboration reminiscent of 'Marvin Gaye and Chardonnay' where the two bounce lines off each other in the last verse. Another cool collaboration is the one with singer PARTYNEXTDOOR on 'Deserve', where the OVO artist adds some smoothness to the dark atmosphere of the album. Jhene Aiko and E-40 also feature on the 12-track project, but perhaps the most noticeable (for reasons that have nothing to do with music) is the one with popstar girlfriend Ariana Grande. And as someone who would've likely died without ever having listened to a Grande song, I unashamedly admit that she did a great job on 'Research', a humorous song about the kind of mischievous girl who probably every second guy has had to deal with. He further balances the sound by adding Chris Brown and Ty Dolla \$ign to 'Play No Games', which will no doubt be a single.

A little bit of fun, a little bit of cheese ('cause what's a Big Sean album without those 'You can do it too' songs), crazy flows and a lot of introspection, Big Sean did it with *Dark Sky Paradise*.

LYRICAL	5	PRODUCTION	4.5	DELIVERY	4.5
OVERALL	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>				4.5/5



HHP
MOTSWAKO HIGH SCHOOL
LEKOKO CC

Saying Jabba is dope is an understatement. But truth be told, his success as a musician beyond the rap category eclipses his skill as an emcee. And whether that is intentional on his part or not, let it be known that HHP has always been one of the nicest in this game. On *Motswako High School* he slows it down and gives us a few hard opportunities to focus on the 'hip

hop' portion of his name, rather than the 'pantsula'.

On a ph-produced collaboration with M.anifest titled 'Jigah', Jabba is simply impeccable (the phrase 'sodomising the beat' comes to mind). On 'Home', featuring Raheem DeVaughn, Jabba is untouchable. On 'Pop Mabhodlela' Jabba is invincible. If he had just packaged these three songs with 'Jabbalude' and 'In My Life' (featuring Omar El, Kay Gee and Cassper Nyovest) for ambience during slow drives, it would really murk the efforts of a lot of cats on the scene, locally and internationally.

Of course it's Jabba, so there are going to be some songs for your folks too. Those are the ones that will unfortunately be taking checks from the mouths of one-dimensional musicians who are only good for spitting 16s. 'Billion Ke Sny', which features one-third of Ganja Beatz Heemal Ganja, is among these songs. Boasting a house baseline that would make even the most hardened hip hop head do a little step, the song has insane saleability and charisma. Following suit, 'Equals', 'Petros' and 'Ke Moloo' (featuring kwaito legend Senyaka) will rock every shebeen in the country for at least the next year.

Jabba doesn't forget to take us all to church as usual. Pulse of Joy make an appearance on the outro track, and Harrison Crump and Bucie help him deliver the soul on 'Amazing' and 'Fall Back In Love' respectively. Other features include Liquid Deep's Zyon, Maz, Collin, Anatii and local songstresses Melina and Tamarsha.

All in all, it goes without saying (but I'm going to say it anyway), Jabba man took everyone to school with this one. Dankie, headboy.

LYRICAL	4.5	PRODUCTION	4.5	DELIVERY	4.5
OVERALL	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>				4.5/5



PROVERB

THE READ TAPE

PROVERB MUSIC PRODUCTIONS

Ten years in the game and there is little to say about Verb that hasn't

already been said. Having directly inspired and in some cases introduced your favourite rappers to the game (Reason, ProKid and Ginger Trill to name a few), Verb's music is synonymous with the story of South African hip hop. He performed on *Jam Alley* as a nobody back in the day. Made his way to kicking freestyles in Newtown. Participated in (and conquered) rap battles and cyphers all over Africa. Rocked underground clubs like Baseline and Horror Café. So by the time his first album *The Book of ProVerb*, a unanimous classic, dropped in 2005, he was already a seasoned artist and fierce lyrical force.

More than anything, *The Read Tape* is a reminder that many have now done it on a bigger platform than him, many have been able to unlock more diverse markets than him, many have the youth's ear more than him, and he might be a producer/presenter on the whitest show in the country, but none are better than him at putting pen to paper to paint pictures.

Verb doesn't give you a chance to breathe. From the time the intro track drops to the last song, he drops entendre after entendre, leaving you with the choice to either keep rewinding, or continue listening in the shame of knowing that he has one up on you with every second line he drops. 'Nobel Beats Prize' is particularly a stand-out spectacle (just look at the name of the song), throwing down the gauntlet for anyone who considers himself a lyricist. 'PenUltimate' (you're spoiling us, Verb) is the kind of extended metaphor that only he can deliver on in a song, punctuating the album: "We'll meet again when heaven is our playground/ Thank you for the love, I hope it never fades out."

Sonically, Verb pretty much delivered core sound. But what's also great to see is that he took risks too. 'The Message' and 'Masters Degree' see him venturing out of his comfort zone to tackle more futuristic instrumentals, with 'In Me' and 'Longevity' as classic cuts to the album with live instrumentation. Features on the album are kept very organic to Verb's vibe, and include M.anifest, Ziyon, RJ Benjamin, 37mph, Modenine and Tebogo Moloto, among others.

Able to manipulate words, much like Em does, and blessed with a superior command of the English language, Verb is the ultimate rapper's rapper. And *The Read Tape* is uncontested in this department. If you're a Verb fan and reading this instead of listening, you're sleeping. If you're not a Verb fan, get the (preferably physical) album, and sit down to bear witness to royalty.

LYRICAL	6	PRODUCTION	4	DELIVERY	4.5
OVERALL	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>				5/5



HYPE SESSIONS EXTREME: FEB/MAR LAUNCH

WHERE: Club Zen, Maboneng Precinct (J-sec)

WHEN: 30 January

WHAT WENT DOWN: When HYPE magazine teams up with Hunter's Extreme the streets always know what's about to happen: one hell of a gully #TurnUp. This time it was for the launch of the February/March issue which was focused on 'realness'. And who is more real to the culture than Boyznbucks at the moment? Supported by DJ Speedsta, DJ Kenzhero, Vardz and C-live, the collective tore down the building with their electric performance and reminded us why their motto is 'turn up yangempela'. Shout-out to everyone who pulled through!







PROVERB PRESENTS: THE READ TAPE LAUNCH

WHEN: 4 March 2015

WHERE: The Lyric Theatre,
Gold Reef City

WHAT: Releasing *The Book of ProVerb* exactly 10 years ago from 4 March 2015, Verb celebrated his decade in the game and also used the opportunity to drop his 5th album, *The Read Tape*, in style. Putting on a live show with a 10-piece orchestra and the help of a formidable list of guests, including Tumi, Reason, RJ Benjamin, 37mph, Amu, Selwyn, The Soil and Zubz, on the evening Kimberley's finest gave his dual accomplishments the abundant occasion they deserve. And of course, **HYPE** was on top of it like a toupee. See page 6 for the album review.



SOUTH AFRICA'S ONLY HIP HOP MAGAZINE

HYPE

WIN
Sneakers, clothes,
movie tickets,
CDs and cosmetics
all worth
R80 000

Flabba

On... The love... the hate... the award...
'Ufck whoever thinks I don't deserve it'

Pro
Ras
ProVerb
50 Cent
Zeus
Writers Block
Archetypes
P-Kuttah
Jozi

STREET CRED

according to D1a, El Nino, Hymphatic
Thabs, Spaceman and Gini Grindith

TOP 5 UNSIGNED

I am... The future of rap
I am... The dopest on the street
I am... NUMBER ONE!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS!



DJ Honda: '...nobody
introduced me to deejaying'

RUN DMC: 'Kids don't
even know the culture...'
- Darryl Mac

Issue 19 June/July 2007. On sale til 5 Aug 2007
Other countries excl. TAX R16-62 **R18.95**

R.I.P FLABBA
1977 - 2015

As a member of legendary local group, Skwatta Kamp, an award-winning soloist, a family man, a generally good person and celebrated member of the hip hop community, you will be missed. Legends live forever.

SHOTLEFT



BOYZNBUCKS



ROAD TO MSWENKOFONTEIN

Boyznbucks. No one really knows what it means. But it's provocative. It keeps the people coming.

THE J-SEC-BASED COLLECTIVE BOYZNBUCKS continue to push boundaries in entertainment, fashion and art. Recently all of those worlds came together when they brought the "Turn up Yangempela!" to the streets of Braamfontein in central Johannesburg for the music video shoot of the group's first official single, 'Mswenkofontein'.

Literally thousands of fans of the movement and fellow artists dressed from head to toe in their freshest threads showed up to show love and be part of the 'Mswenko Olympics'.

The video is coarse and channels the aesthetic inspirations of the likes of Wu-Tang, Dipset and most recently A\$AP Mobb, who all juxtapose raw street etiquette with phlyness in the form of fashion and general lifestyle. 'Mswenkofontein' was shot by acclaimed filmmaker Lebogang Rasethaba and directed by him and Smiso Zwane AKA Okmalumkoolkat. On the same day, Riky Rick shot part of his three-city video in central JHB.

If you haven't already seen these movies, make sure you hit the interweb and do it! 📺

TWITTER: @BOYZNBUCKS
INSTAGRAM: @BOYZBUCKS

VERBALZ: DERF EBMEKAY

PATTY MONROE

AN AFRO AND A DREAM

When you have never so much as seen the door hinge of a recording studio your entire life and you get picked out of a line and get offered a deal after spitting a few casual bars, there's a chance that you might've inhaled too many paint fumes and drifted into a wonderful dream. Or, this might be your reality and you might be Patty Monroe.

YOU'VE LIKELY HEARD HER FIRST SINGLE 'High Fashion' on the radio, seen the music video or at least heard the name. Her bold trademarks make Miss Monroe difficult to ignore: big, golden, frizzy afro, bold fashion sense and an audio and onscreen aura that oozes fierceness. But for all these colossal qualities, her love for music is what grabs you the most when you are in her presence.

"My brother was an emcee. I remember it was the night of Beat Bangaz. I was underage but I still went [laughs]. I saw people performing on stage and how passionate the crowd was about the music and I couldn't believe how awesome an experience it was," she recollects. "There was so much love in the room for the music. I decided that night that this is where I always wanna be."

But it was a while until the dream came to fruition. Years later she would be handpicked from thousands of hopefuls lined up to audition for MTV Base's VJ search, but not for her presenting skills. During a random freestyle, a correspondent working on the set observed her and linked her up with Karimore Studio in Cape Town for recording sessions, which Patty surprisingly declined shortly after arriving because she was focused on finishing school.

"When I got there I realised I wasn't ready," she says. "I needed to be in the right space for me to pursue that. Luckily, sometime later when that was all behind me, I recorded an EP and it got into the right person's hands. Garick (commonly known on these streets as Gsuspect) and I linked up. He believed in me and we started working."

If that series of events isn't mind-blowing enough for a newbie, internationally respected local house DJ Culoe De Song paid the newcomer the biggest compliment a newcomer could receive when he offered to produce her first single 'High Fashion'. Kalawa vocalist Busiswa also showed her support for Patty's music when she invited her on stage as part of her set at Wits O Week, where she performed in front of thousands of people for the first time ever.

"I was so scared that day. I promise you I was backstage hyperventilating [laughs]. But in general it's been amazing to see the response that people have to my music. It's still unreal to me."

When asked about possible criticism from purists due to her unconventional sound, she doesn't flinch.

"I don't know how I would describe my music, to be honest. All I know is that it all starts with hip hop," she affirms. "Though one might not guess it right away from listening to my first single, my influences are people like Erykah Badu, Tribe Called Quest, Frank Sinatra, Czar and Queen Latifah. More than being hip hop artists, these are artists who were able to take from hip hop and then challenge the norm by interpreting it in a way that was organic to them and that's what I'm

about: being true to myself. I don't get caught up trying to explain to people what my music is. It is made to be heard and to be felt. I also like that fast-paced traditional music too. On an instrumentation level, it's really cool. I like dancing and having fun. We are South Africans and South Africa is a dancing nation. I think that in defining who we are as South African hip hop, we mustn't run away from that. We should embrace it."

She punctuates our encounter by speaking about 2015 and her post-debut plan: "The plan is to make good music. I'll do that and hopefully a project will come from it." ■

WTF WHAT THE FUNK?

Remember when Bob Mabena asked “Who’s got the funk?” **HYPE** may finally have an answer for him. Disturbing the peace with the momentum from their first single ‘Nomusa’, three-member crew WTF have blown up in a way that would make the Taliban jealous. Straight out the streets of Durban with an unapologetically nouveau sound, the trio who make up the group, Aux Cable, Efelow and Moshine Magnif, are all about that ‘gqom’.

DON’T WORRY IF YOU’RE NOT FAMILIAR with the term. It’s new to everyone but WTF. That’s what happens when you’re pioneering a sound that is so unique it doesn’t fall into any category that already exists. Combining local elements with influences from a pool of their favourite artists (who include Coldplay’s Chris Martin, Chicco Twala, Okmalumkoolkat, Migos and MGMT), the group describes their signature sound as ‘gqom trap’.

“‘Gqom’ is a Durban term which basically just means ‘ratchet’. It’s also an upbeat variation of house music that is very popular in KZN. It’s something we’ve always been exposed to being from around here so it made sense. We incorporated trap music into the hip hop mix and it created something completely new.”

In case you’re wondering, WTF stands for ‘Witness The Funk’. Starting out as a collective who experimented with different styles and genres of music, the group chose the name in the absence of a term they could use to define their music. A common abbreviation usually meaning ‘what the f*ck?’, they explain that that’s the reaction they wanted people to have when first experiencing their work. They seem to have achieved that now, but the journey was not always smooth sailing.

“It started off when we all realised that we share the same passion for music and recognised one another’s talents,” Aux Cable, real name Charles Mchunu, tells us. “So in 2009 while in college, we formed the group. We released our first mixtape in 2010 titled *The Pursuit*, but had a tough time managing the demands of school and music at the same time, so we took a break for a while and reformed in 2013 with a better understanding of the industry. Two of our members had left the crew, namely Sanseason, who is completing his medical degree, and Muzi, who went on to become a solo producer and DJ. We were fortunate to meet Efelow who shares the same vision as we do. Things started making sense from there.”

They’re hoping that ‘sense’ will turn into cents and Mandela notes soon. ‘Nomusa’ is currently enjoying high rotation on radio and is probably trailing Kim Kardashian’s ba-donk by a close second on the blogs. It doesn’t

hurt when the OGs in the game feel your music and offer their support either.

“The support we’re getting from the public is amazing and humbling. We’re grateful for the amount of support we’re getting from fellow artists like Okmalumkoolkat, Riky Rick, Cassper Nyovest, Reason, DJ Maphorisa, DJ Cndo and some others. Some of them call and just wanna help out, which is a great compliment to us as upcomers.”

Currently in the process of sharing the booth with Toya Delazy, Okmalumkoolkat, Aewolf Wolf, Cassper Nyovest, Maphorisa (Uhuru), Nuz and others, the crew is motivated as ever and not planning on quitting anytime soon. ☒




WAAR WAS JY?

With such rapid advances in civilisation it's easy to forget things, like before Yogi Sip and those addictive Woolies fruit blends that may or may not have crack in them, Inkomazi was the drink of choice for all the real Gs! (don't front). Or that before there was ever a *Ben 10* to keep your little brothers entertained, *Biker Mice From Mars* and *Rabubi* held it down on screen with persistence. Yeah, life is moving that fast. But don't worry, we've got upi.



SINCE THIS IS THE FREEDOM DAY ISSUE, it is only fitting to throwback to a moment almost 10 years ago when a group of four friends from Johannesburg decided that they were going to be fearless enough to create and release music they felt represented who they were – an alternative side of the hip hop game that was commonly frowned upon at the time because of its accusations of being ‘bubblegum’. Instead, Jozi released *Muthaland Crunk* and the game was never the same again. Take a ride down memory lane.

- Jozi formed in 2006 and originally consisted of members Da L.E.S (rapper), Ishmael (singer), Crazy Lu (rapper) and Bongani Fassie (vocalist/producer).
- The group released their first album *Muthaland Crunk* under record label Ghetto Ruff in 2007.
- In the same year they released their first single ‘Muthaland’, which was initially partly received with confusion and resistance in the hip hop circles because of its unconventional blend of sounds at the time. It shortly became a massive commercial success.
- Shortly after, Crazy Lu left the group.
- The album also produced another successful single by the name of ‘What’s With Da Attitude? (Wayithini Umami?)’.
- The single led the way for the new distinct sound which merged southern American hip hop crunk music (Da L.E.S grew up in Texas) with various South African tribal instrumentation. They called the new sound ‘mutherland crunk’.
- In 2007 Jozi were nominated for a SAMA, four Metro FM Awards and a Channel O Spirit of Africa Award, in categories such as Best Group and Best Hip Hop. The group was also afforded the opportunity to perform at the international 46664 Mandela tribute concert.
- Though only Da L.E.S and Ishmael remain as part of Jozi, the group has since released two more albums, namely *Wildlife* (2010) and *Moving the City* (2012), performed on stages all over the world, had their own reality TV show on SABC 1 and won countless awards.
- And the group of course also launched the solo career of The North God, otherwise known as Da L.E.S.
- Both Jozi and L.E.S are credited as pioneers of South African new school hip hop.

If you don't know, now you know ... 

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DJ DIMPLEZ TAKING AFRICA ALL THE WAY

You'd be very hard-pressed to find a more hardworking man in the music business than DJ Dimplez. Between spawning Pop Bottles six years ago, being an ambassador for Ciroc (alongside balling names like D'banj, Bonang Matheba and David Tlale), releasing smash hits on the continent and turning global dance floors into rhythmic stampedes, it's no wonder he is considered the most successful DJ in Africa. But you know, we're **HYPE**. So he gave us some of his very valuable time to discuss what he's been getting up to.

IN THE PAST, YOU WERE VERY VOCAL ABOUT DJs being catalysts for music through singles but it not being your place to release albums. Yet last year you gave in and released your first album *Zeal*. What changed?

I actually never wanted to release an album because I never thought it was a platform for DJs to explore and to be honest I still don't think it is. But due to the fact that the system is so slow, I actually had a backlog of good music that was just sitting. What I mean by 'slow' is that often a radio station doesn't allow you to have two songs playlisted on their station at the same time. And my work ethic is so vicious that I was producing music at a rate that the stations couldn't accommodate. So I decided to create *Zeal* because it had the feel of an album. Both myself and Anatii, who was a huge part of it, decided that since we have the music it would be a good way to give it to the people.

Makes sense. What was the thinking behind the title name *Zeal*?

The album title pretty much explains itself. *Zeal* is defined as 'great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective.' It's up to me to keep that fire in me burning and to stay motivated by what I'm doing, especially in such a crazy industry. I have always been a person who's had the passion to do more and do better and that title describes this quality in one word.

As a DJ, I would imagine your impulse is to make music that is able to rock a crowd. With an album it usually helps to have a more diverse sound, especially since yours has 20 songs. How did you approach the making of this from a tracklisting perspective?

The first few songs that I made were obviously directed at the club scene as music that I would play during my sets at gigs. But when I decided to take it further by creating an album I had to think of ways of bringing out more than that. So we experimented with more sounds using different styles of hip hop. I did that by going for more content from the songs that I released in the second half and there are a few songs like 'Criminal' that I had to create specifically for the album.

The role of the DJ seems to be changing from being the guy who just mixes live music, to being a producer and curator too and you have been one of the guys who have led the DJ revolution in Africa. What's your take on the popular opinion that DJs are overstepping their role by becoming musicians and you need to stay in your lane?

I know it's contradictory but I still personally think that DJs shouldn't release music. It is part of the DJs' responsibility to help artists push music that they release. Although, DJs need to get more involved in the music-making process so that they can understand how much

VERBALZ: KGADI MOTHOTSE // VISUALZ: FLO MOKALE



goes into it. It costs a lot of money, it takes a lot of time and energy as well and going through that makes one appreciate the art form a whole lot more.

At the same time, because as a DJ you frequent thousands of clubs, you get to know what kind of songs people respond to. There was a time when local artists weren't exactly making those kinds of songs and that made it difficult for a DJ trying to rock a crowd to play local music that people could enjoy in a club. So eventually some DJs took it upon themselves to create the music. In many of those songs, artists are featured and end up getting bookings because of those songs, so in a way we are growing together.

Very fair point of view. Now we are seeing local hip hop take a lot of influence from kwaito and house lately with guys like Cassper Nyovest and Cashtime's skhanda rap. Some denounce it and some are embracing it. Your view?

More than anything the style of rap should fit the artist and be real to him/her. I think it's dope that people are experimenting because it means there will be more varieties. But no single sound or style can be the official sound of SA hip hop. Just like in the States, there is crunk music in the South, and another sound in New York and a different sound on the West Coast, but they are all American. Here, we still need the lyrical songs, the conscious songs and all the other styles. But we can't all go in one direction just because it's a style that's working right now.

Getting into the business of music now, how did the partnership with Ciroc come about?

They approached me and they found my work and hustle admirable and saw that I was putting in the work and wanted to align their strategy with mine, and that's basically how it came about.

AKA and a few others are of the belief that corporates sometimes take advantage of local hip hop by using artists to satisfy their objectives without putting back into the culture. Do you think that corporate investment has a place in hip hop or should we do everything ourselves?

There definitely is a place for it. If you want to have an event to showcase hip hop, a lot of times you need to have a corporate sponsor, depending on the scale of your event. We can do that while still being in control of our music and our art. Also because we need the people to get involved to make them realise that we can represent international brands well, not only show the corporates but the people too.

What are some of the other plans you have set for 2015?

I like keeping things simple. I want to make sure that Pop Bottles still becomes a bigger and better experience, still focusing on the album and still promoting it. Most importantly, expose myself to other parts of Africa and grow the brand by continuing to make music that South Africa loves to hear. ■

SMASHIS THE LONE RANGER OF RAP

The industry is harsh and unforgiving. One day you can be living in the security of what seems like a stable situation and the next be in a state of obscurity that leaves you questioning the very structure that brought you up. No one knows this better than Smashis.

AFTER RISING TO RECOGNITION ON YFM's *Siz n' Scoop* freestyle circuit back in 2011 and subsequently crashing onto the scene as part of the Teargas extension project, Cashtime Fam, the 24-year-old KZN-born rapper has seen some things in the short while he's been around. Since then his sudden and unexplained exclusion from the group's rebirth, Cashtime Life, has put a spotlight on his career, leaving everyone wondering about what went down.

"Is Smashis a part of Cashtime Life? What's his relationship with Kid X and K.O now? Is there beef? How come he hasn't dropped an official single yet? Yeah, he definitely fell off."

With the release of the Simelane EP, Smashis rises above the whispers and is taking his career into his own hands, Cashtime or not. Setback? Maybe. A has-been? Not a chance. Not if he has anything to do with it. The needle on the clock is moving. And Smash-time is approaching sooner than you think.

In the beginning there was Cashtime Fam with you and Kid X, AB Crazy and the Teargas OGs. You guys released an album and some time later K.O announced that the group was no longer functioning and that the focus was on all the members' individual projects. Take me through what has been happening since then. I've practically been cooped up in the studio. I didn't really ever get the chance to develop myself individually, because it was always about the best work we could produce as a crew. When you're in a group you need to be selfless and play your part.

It was only after I really started to focus on myself that I realised I didn't really have a musical identity that people resonated with outside of Cashtime. You've got to understand that I only really started writing in '09 when I heard Drake's *Best I Ever Had*; that's when got inspired and really thought to myself that

VERBALZ: SPACEBOY P // VISUALZ: DIRTYLOLLI



I could do this rap thing. I was always good at writing in general, but '09 was when I started to apply myself. And in a split second, it went from that to being mentored by the greatest songwriters to do it in the rap game. Shows, interviews, the album. So it's only now when things died down with the group that I started searching for my voice as an individual. That's where I've been.

So, elephant in the room: what happened or is happening with Cashtime Life? You were an original member of the first group and then suddenly we started to see less of you. No one in the group has officially addressed it and it feels like anytime someone is asked, they have the best PR answer to avoid answering directly. I've always just gone with their lead and given the PR answer too but I'll keep it real with you this time. To be honest with you I don't even

know and that's no bullsh*t. At first the guys would all go to a show together and I wouldn't know about it, but it wouldn't be a big deal because it would be one person's show and I was okay with it. And then I'd be on Twitter or something and see that they were all at an interview that I wasn't told about. That sort of thing happened a couple more times and there eventually came a point where I saw Kid X did a song I didn't know about and which was released with the backing of the group. It was confusing. But all in all when people ask me whether I'm in Cashtime or not, I don't actually know. As much as I'd love to answer that question, I've also never gotten a straight-up answer myself. I see what everyone else is seeing and know what everyone else knows, meaning I also have the same questions in my head.

Did you never have the conversation where you sat down with the guys to find out what the plan was?

The only time we had that conversation was after the word went out to the public about

Cashtime Fam no longer being a group. I still don't understand it myself. I don't know the actual structure of what the Cashtime Life situation is. What was told to me was 'Just put in the work' and things kind of went quiet from there.

What is your relationship with K.O, X, Ma-E and the rest of the guys like right now?

Nothing has changed on my side, it's still all love and respect. But understand that I'm a man of pride. If someone is your boy who you're always hanging out with, but he switches up on you with no explanation, it'll hurt at first but eventually you'll have to take the hint and have to start focusing on getting back to a place where you can survive on your own.

"I'M FIGHTING FOR ALL OF MY SH*T"

K.O called me out of the blue some time last year to check up on me, you know? Considering what was happening, it was a bit surprising. But the way I look at it is, if that's what the relationship has come down to then I'm cool with that. At the end of the day they don't owe me anything. If anything, they have done a lot for me. People didn't know me before them. I was a kid from KZN who had just started rapping and was ill, but there were so many others too. They chose me and gave me the opportunity to learn from them and release music on a high level. They put me in the game so I have no reason to feel entitled to anything. All I can do is appreciate that and take it from here.

Because things happened so quickly for you in the beginning, do you think that in a way, even though it was unintentional, having been under the Teargas/Cashtime Fam situation makes things much harder for you now? If you were a new guy you would have the opportunity to make a first impression, but now some people probably are never going to give you a chance because they've summed you up based on what you've already done.

I will always look at it as something that assisted me because I learned so much in that period and learned it at such a fast pace – and managed. If I were on my own it would've probably taken me 10 years to learn that sh*t and that for me will always be a blessing. It was a shortcut.

But then again, truth is shortcuts don't always groom you to get to a point where the people who helped you are gonna release you and it could compromise you knowing what the next step is. You learn and take in as much as you can until a certain point where you have to do it on your own. I didn't even know what the next step was and I wasn't even ready for them to let go of me because I wasn't even told. If I was told I was gonna prepare for it. At the end of the day they're still the people who put me on so that will always be a blessing.

Another thing I look at as far as music is concerned is that they will always be some of the best people to learn from. They've always been the best song makers and even for K.O to change the sound of SA rap and have it succeed the way it did clearly proves n*ggas know what they're doing. Now, having learned from them,

people are looking at me like 'Yo, bring it!' So I'd rather have the pressure from that than never having had the opportunity to learn and do the things that I did.

The pressure is much more intense for someone in your position than a new artist because you've already released music of a certain quality with Cashtime. Now the resources and the support are not necessarily what they were, but the expectation from the public remains high. Do you feel that you have something to prove now that you've been left to stand alone?

I'm in a position where I realised where people sleep on my bars. I'm probably one of the most

precise rappers you'll find in our country with the exception of Tumi. Not too many people can rhyme as precise as I do. Before when I was in a group I'd rap and speak on whatever, depending on what the song required. The songs were not for or about me but for the people instead.

I can understand how people would be confused hearing how different my style and my rhymes are as a soloist, because now I'm speaking for myself in these songs. I've started doing that with songs like 'Grinding' because the people have never really heard me rap like that, as myself. As a rapper the first thing you wanna do is prove how dope you are, but because people see the persona of the pretty light-skinned n*gga from Cashtime, I'm starting to realise that I might have to start coming to terms with never receiving the praise I deserve as a pure emcee. I don't know if I'll ever be able to break that image because what we did as a group was so impactful.

Yes I have swag and yes the ladies might like me, but f*ck my image, listen to what I'm really saying. And that's why I think X was able to connect with people on that level, because he didn't have that barrier, so the only thing people expected of him was rhymes. They literally just listened to him. And that's why I really respect my male fans even more because they are able to look past all of that and recognise just the talent.

So what's the game plan going forward from here?

Right now it's the EP. It's basically an introduction to who I am as a rapper and a person. And then from there I would like to drop a single for the listeners. I already have things in place, I just have to position them.

Who are you working with now?

Right now it's just me and I don't know if I wanna work with other people because of the previous relationship I had with Cashtime and Teargas. I just want to figure out my own path for now. What's been really crazy is the calls I've gotten from different people in the industry who are looking for me to be affiliated with them. It's a great vote of confidence when HHP tells you that everyone is sleeping you [laughs]. But I need to be in control of my own art as well as the business, at least for now. It's my time now. ☒



TAKE TWO YANGA

On the back end of being featured on AKA's 'Run Jozi' and Vigilante's 'Sorry Makhe', releasing his hit single 'Awuth'yam' and its remix featuring Kid X and AKA, upcoming rapper Yanga has been a very busy man. And it's not out of pity that the young legend has the support of the biggest names in the game already; Yanga has been paying his dues for close to a decade in a way that has given him 20/20 vision. Now that the first scene of his musical journey is out of the way, he's on take two.

SO IN 2014 YOUR ONLINE FREESTYLES, features and now the single 'Awuth'yam' dropped and you seemed to have come out of nowhere. But the truth is that you've actually been in the music business for a really long time now. Tell us about that.

It all started in 2007. I was already working for Ventilation under Slikour and Shugasmakx as a website administrator and we came up with the idea of putting together a weekly behind-the-scenes series for local music videos. That turned into one of those 'a day in the life of ...' kind of things, where we'd follow a rapper for a day and just showcase their life. It all just developed from there and eventually we decided to shoot an actual video. It helped that I'd already studied this at UJ, but at the time I hadn't had any practical experience yet so we really started from the bottom.

During your time with Ventilation you shot and directed a lot of amazing videos ...

The thing is, I was always a fan of the music first and foremost, so my perspective was always different to any other director who was hired for just their technical abilities. I think the artist found it easier to relate to my type of music videos because I would work with the artist every step of the way. When an artist came to me, I understood where they were at in the industry and my vision was tailored to that particular artist, from their style to their music and their personality. It was beyond just shooting a video. I was passionate about the work and the artists would see that.

So fast forward to some years later. You're rapping now. When did you decide to make the transition?

Honestly, I always wanted to rap but I wanted to learn about the music industry as a whole first. At some point, recently, I made the decision to focus on my music and I just started going at it. I would find myself working in studio, pulling all-nighters with Kwesta and Cashtime Fam, and the more I did that, the more I realised that this is my calling. A lot of time has passed and I feel like I need to catch up to where I feel I need to be.

What did working with Slikour and Shugasmakx all those years contribute to your journey of becoming a man in the spotlight?

Slikour had a really big dream for the website and for a long time he felt that I was the person to execute that dream. But I had my own feelings towards it, thinking "Damn, I'm never gonna get out of this position." I would, however, say that the one thing I learned from both Shuga and Slikour is how to carry yourself in this business. Those years gave me a lot of wisdom which has really contributed to the way I do things now because I know exactly how I want to position myself in the industry.

More recently, you've directed K.O's 'Son of a Gun' and 'No Fear' freestyle, AKA's 'Run Jozi' and Kid X's 'Cooler Bag' ... What's the vision for Young Legend Films?

When we shot 'Run Jozi' I think that is where local videos shifted, from the shots to the location, and I acknowledge my own work because my industry is very critical. So my vision for Young Legend Films is to keep raising my own standards, no matter who I'm doing it for. As long as the culture of SA hip hop is put on a greater plateau because of Young Legend Films.

Word. Is there a project on the way?

Yeah, the response has been amazing, so much that it's actually been overwhelming, and there will for sure be other songs out that aren't out yet. I'm also still in studio working on my own projects, you should expect my next single around April/May. ☒



HYPEhoney

Sweet

AS HONEY

Let's be honest: when you're a professional model, professional actress, successful clothing designer and ridiculously gorgeous, you don't really have any real reason to be a good person. Society says you should try to be, but hey, what do they know? They're probably just bitter. Well, we thank our lucky stars for 'society' because if it had not prevailed, we mere mortals would not be blessed with the divinity that is Omuhle Makaziwe Gela. Gentle-spirited and insanely sexy, she defines what it means to be a sweet as honey.



Where did you grow up?

I kinda feel lucky that I grew up in the East Rand, in Thokoza. I feel it influenced a lot of my creativity as a child.

We can see why it was a natural decision to get into modelling. You were on *Muvhango* and are now starting a new show *Umlilo* on e-tv. How did you get into the craft of acting?

My mom always says I was that child who just lived in the moment. So I guess being a performer is something that was just in me. Modelling I find to be like silent acting: you have to speak to communicate a message, but without saying a word. There is poetry in that.

Most recently you launched Twenty Swimwear. Tell us a bit about where that name comes from and the motivation behind creating a line of swimwear?

I am in my twenties right now and as a young woman it's a time I believe we should celebrate life. And I hope to capture that in my designs. I am inspired by women and I celebrate all types of shapes and sizes. That is why we have a variety of sizes and looks to suit all body types. The aim is for all women to feel sexy.

You've got an amazing body. What do you do to keep in shape?

If you had to check out my Instagram account, you would realise I am a chocoholic and I really love food. I try not to over-indulge or deprive myself. So I keep a balance and go to the gym four times a week.

Do you have any tattoos and if you do, what are they?

Yeah I do. I feel tattoos are a permanent reminder of our old selves that we always carry to remind our future selves of the true priceless moments in our lives. I have three. One is a butterfly, one is a Latin quote and the other is my sister's initials. She has my mine tattooed on her.

Everyone has a guilty pleasure. What would you say is yours?

Definitely chocolate.

When you're not modelling, acting or designing swimwear, what does Omuhle like to get up to?

My best friends are my mom and sister. I am lucky that I am guided by people who love me unconditionally. So spending time with people

who are close to me is my favourite pastime. Going to the spa with my mom and sister is probably my favourite thing to do.

What's the craziest thing a guy has done to get your attention?

I really appreciate it when people give acknowledgement for my work. And sometimes people get carried away and I had to get a restraining order on one guy who had taken stalking to the next level.

What does it mean to you to be a young South African woman?

We live in the land of opportunity and our beautiful country has so much to offer. I am proud and feel privileged to be born at the time when the country is going through this transition.

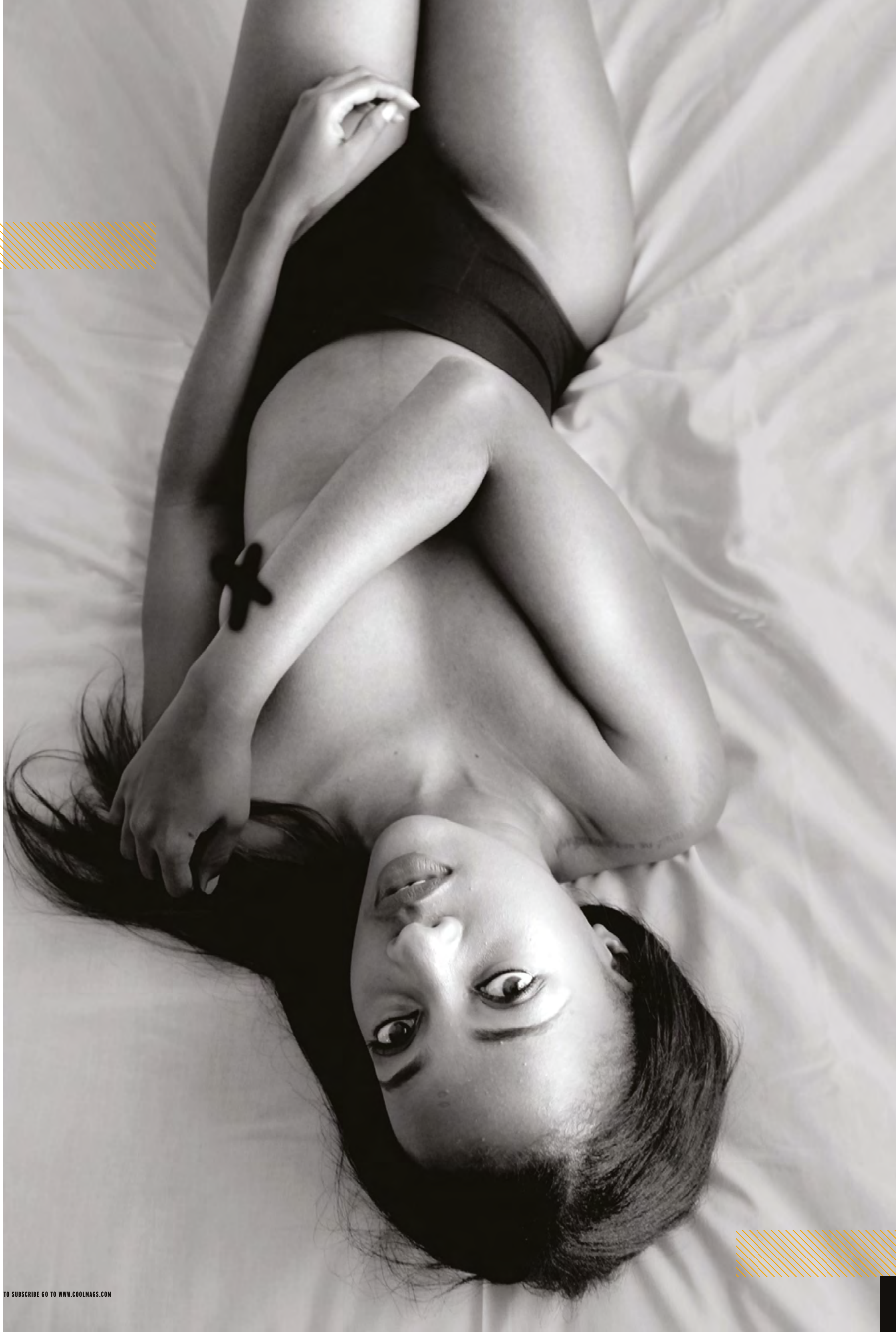
What albums are currently bumping in your speakers?

AKA *Levels* and Beyoncé

Drake or Kendrick Lamar?

Kendrick 🎧

INSTAGRAM: @OMUHLEGELA
TWITTER: OMUHLE_GELA





25 LET FREEDOM REIGN! YEARS

*They broke rocks
But the spirit was never
broken
Never broken
Oh my black president*

*Now in 1990
The people's president
Came out from jail
Raised up his hand and said
"Viva, viva, my people"*

2015 MARKS THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF Mandela's release from his 27-year prison sentence under the apartheid regime. Although

Freedom Day is dated April 1994, it was the release of the ANC leader, Tata Madiba, in 1990 that started the gears of change and instilled hope back into what had been a hopeless nation for the majority of its population.

It's interesting to note that in almost all of the country's meaningful events, the nation united under song. Nelson Mandela: An International Tribute for a Free South Africa was a music concert held on 16 April 1990 at Wembley Stadium, London, United Kingdom (UK). It was broadcast to more than 60 countries and attended by famous figures including Denzel Washington, Anita Baker and Neil Young. Nelson Mandela gave a moving speech that called on nations of the world to continue to put pressure on the South

African government to give in to change. In the same year, Brenda Fassie released what came to be the theme song for restored spirits, 'Black President'.

Prior to 1994, South Africa was for the most part excluded from participating in the global community in a number of ways due to imposed sanctions. It was only after the lifting of the sanctions post '94, combined with the imminent effects of globalisation, that SA rejoined the global community, which opened up the country to new economic, social, cultural and recreational opportunities. In light of the magnificent landmark that is a quarter of a century of freedom, we zoom in on the number '25' and also explore how change translates in the context of different aspects of modern culture. ■

VISUALZ: SOURCE GLOBE

WOLF OF ALL STREETS

"All I ever wanted was a big body Benz and a clear set of rims," raps 50 Cent on G-Unit artist Kidd Kidd's single. And he's not the only one. Infatuated with the bulky silhouette since the '80s, there are too many rap songs from that era that make reference to old skool hip hop's favourite kind of car. But one reigns supreme.



IN 1990, 25 YEARS AGO, MERCEDES introduced their 500 E model. This ain't just any Benz. The 'Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' as it was called by the media was very special because it was created in close co-operation with Porsche. Each 500 E was hand-built by Porsche, transported back and forth between the Mercedes plant and Porsche's Rossle-Bau plant in Zuffenhausen, Germany, during assembly – taking a full 18 days to complete each model. Unfortunately, the Benz Porsche hybrid was discontinued in 1994. ☒



WHY THIS WAS A GOOD RIDE FOR RAPPERS 25 YEARS AGO:

CLASS: Mid-size, luxury car (enough trunk space for the sub-woofer but still fancy enough to pick up girls in).

BODY STYLE: Four-door sedan (to ride out with the homies).

ENGINE: 5.0L M119 V8 (because drive-bys aren't for the faint-hearted).

TRANSMISSION: Four-speed automatic (because how you gon' be changing gears with drank in your hand?).

WHEELBASE: 2,800mm (big, iced-out rims).

ACCELERATION: 0-100km/h in 5.5-6 seconds (so the cops can't keep up).

RECORDED TOP SPEED: 260km/h (so the baby mamma can't keep up).



25 YEARS

LET FREEDOM REIGN!

25 FILMS AND SHOWS FROM 25 YEARS AGO

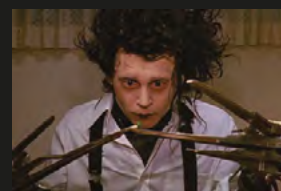
Whether on the big or small screen, motion pictures have always contributed to the culture in the way that, like music, they tell our stories using a medium with very few limitations. They have also documented the fashion, slang, current affairs and social dialogue of a period in time. Whether it was Jazz getting thrown out the crib by Uncle Phil on *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* or Steven Seagal's one-dimensional facial expression and bone-crushing martial arts moves, 1990 was not a bad year in film. Plus, which rapper doesn't like a good movie quotable? Here's what the tube looked like 25 years ago.

1/ THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR

Will was a millionaire rapper from Philadelphia with DJ Jazzy Jeff in the '80s before he blew all of his hard-earned dough on the flashy life. By 1989 he was broke, but got saved when television network NBC approached him to have his own sitcom. The show premiered on 10 September 1990, with music produced by legendary Quincy Jones and a cast who showed high ratings from the onset.

What was special about the show was its depiction of black people as affluent, sophisticated family folk, which challenged many of the negative 'black' labels that played out on screen. Will also brought the streets to mainstream television in a massive way, rocking hip hop slang and seen freestyling, dancing and beatboxing on a frequent basis. Fila, Nike and L.A. Gear also occasionally debuted limited sneaker and clothing releases on the show as Will's outfits. The high-top fade and flat-top haircuts that Jazz and Will rocked inspired a lot of people through the '90s and still do today.

A worldwide cultural inspiration, the show is as much part of the hip hop lifestyle fabric as head spins.



Here are some other culturally important shows and movies that made an impact 25 years ago:

2. *In Living Color*
3. *TaleSpin*
4. *Mr Bean*
5. *The Flash*
6. *House Party*
7. *Law & Order*
8. *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*
9. *Widget the World Watcher*
10. *Mo' Better Blues*
11. *Goodfellas*
12. *Home Alone*
13. *Total Recall*
14. *Die Hard 2*
15. *Edward Scissorhands*
16. *The Godfather III*
17. *Back to the Future III*
18. *Rocky 5*
19. *Another 48 Hrs*
20. *Delta Force 2*
21. *Hard 2 Kill*
22. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*
23. *Darkman*
24. *Dick Tracy*
25. *Tiny Toon Adventures*

25 ALBUMS FROM 25 YEARS AGO

Hip hop was on its job at the beginning of the '90s. We take a look back at 25 important albums to the culture that dropped 25 years ago. Do your homework, kids!

1/BLACK PRESIDENT — BRENDA FASSIE

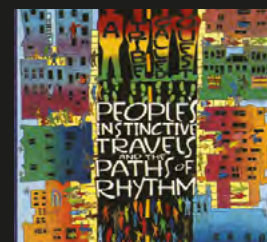
Chicco Twala and Brenda Fassie held it down for what was considered the new school of music in South Africa at the time. With a hip hop scene limited to Prophets of the City – who were already banned from radio and TV for their anti-Apartheid lyrics, Brenda and a very few others' music served as the voice of the people on a commercial level. And there was no statement more powerful and relevant in music than the one made with *Black President* that year. R.I.P and salute to the G.O.A.T.

2/MAMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT — LL COOL J

Today he might best be known for licking his lips and unjustifiably taking his shirt off in music videos but LL Cool J was regarded a lyrical beast once upon a time. Carrying the torch for Def Jam as the first solo artist ever signed at the label put a lot of pressure on the then 22-year-old emcee, which showed in his critically disappointing *Walking With a Panther* album in 1989. But the following year, LL came back harder than granite when he dropped the unanimous classic *Mamma Said Knock You Out*. Apart from the hard-hitting title track, the album also featured the very controversial 'Until Da Break of Dawn' which was a diss track to MC Hammer, Ice T and Kool Moe Dee. The track caused heavy waves in streets and was also used as the official soundtrack for Kid n Play's *House Party* movie. *Mamma Said Knock You Out* sold two million copies and later won a Grammy for Best Rap Solo Performance.

3/AMERIKKKA'S MOST WANTED — ICE CUBE

After Ice Cube left legendary group NWA, many were sure it was over for him. And even if he did release an album, it certainly wasn't meant to be one of the most referenced gangsta rap albums of all time. Charged with raw socio-political commentary throughout, superior samples (Kool & the Gang, James Brown, etc.), and features from Yo-Yo and Chuck D and Flava Flave of Public Enemy, *AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted* competes with diamond as for the hardest substance on the planet. Cube's sound, outspoken approach to lyrics and disregard for authority influenced the music of fellow rappers to follow including Tupac, Xzibit, Nas and Ras Kass.



Here are 22 other important albums to the culture that were released 25 years ago.

4. *Our World* – P.O.C
5. *People's Distinctive Travels and Path of Rhythm* – Tribe Called Quest
6. *To the Extreme* – Vanilla Ice
7. *Fear of a Black Planet* – Public Enemy
8. *One For All* – Brand Nubian
9. *Step in the Arena* – Gang Starr
10. *Edutainment* – KRSOne
11. *Blacks' Magic* – Salt n Pepa
12. *Funky Technician* – DJ Mike Smooth & Lord Finesse
13. *Wanted: Dead or Alive* – Kool G Rap and DJ Polo
14. *Let the Rhythm Hit 'Em* – Eric B. & Rakim
15. *Take a Look Around* – Masta Ace
16. *2 Low Life Muthas* – 2 Live Crew
17. *Taste of Chocolate* – Kool G Rap
18. *Banned in the U.S.A* – 2 Live Crew
19. *Back from Hell* – Run DMC
20. *Business As Usual* – EPMD
21. *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* – MC Hammer
22. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*
23. *Kill at Will* – Ice Cube
24. *The Geto Boys* – Geto Boys
25. *Grits Sandwiches for Breakfast* – Kid Rock



25 YEARS

LET FREEDOM REIGN!

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN TEAM MEMBERS didn't snitch on one another. Although running up on someone, because of a grudge, and fighting to liberate your country are worlds apart, the two operate on the same fundamental principle: loyalty for the cause.

Here are a few rappers who did not follow Mandela and Umkhonto weSizwe's lead in sticking together after getting caught, and chose to snitch instead:

LIL DURK AGAINST UNKNOWN CRIMINAL

Durk is from Chicago, the gangbanging capital of the world. Last year, Durk was charged with unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon after officers went to his home on an unrelated matter and discovered the weapon. Durk is being accused of co-operating with authorities, in order to secure a release on bond, after mysteriously being arrested on gun charges after bail was denied. It is believed by his neighbourhood that he has given police names of more serious criminals, whom they are pursuing, in exchange for his freedom.

YOUNG JEEZY AGAINST JUNIOR MAFIA

Believe it or not, on more than a few occasions there have been allegations that ATL rapper, Jeezy the Snowman, snitched on Black Mafia Family, one of the most notorious drug cartels in the US, founded in the '80s. Jeezy's relationship with the cartel, which helped fund his career, is well documented and he continues to shout them out to this day. Between 2006 and 2009, when police arrested and convicted over 150 members of the organisation (including Big Meech) on charges including trafficking, murder and illegal gun possession, Jeezy was left out of it completely. Former BMF bodyguard and recently released convict, 'Big House,' accused Jeezy of being "an informer for the Feds against me and BMF."

BOBBY SHMURDA AGAINST GS9 CREW

"And we keep 'em nine millis on my block, n*gga And Monte keep it on him, he done dropped n*ggas And Trigger he be wildin', he some hot n*gga"

Ever wondered why rappers can say whatever they want on songs and not get arrested? Well,

FREEDOM OR FAME

Snitching has never been highly regarded in the hip hop community. The unspoken code is a result of distrust in police, who were viewed as even worse enemies, in black communities, than neighbourhood thugs. Confiding in law enforcement was seen as a sign of weakness and a betrayal of your community, sometimes even punishable by death. It's one thing to run to the po-po if you are the victim of a crime, but it's another thing entirely if you are part of a unit being tried or investigated, and you give the boys in blue information in exchange for lesser sentencing. Ever heard the expression 'snitches get stitches'?

"EVER HEARD THE EXPRESSION 'SNITCHES GET STITCHES'?"



song lyrics are generally not admissible as evidence in court because they are considered to be artistic expression and could be hypothetical or fictional. Just make sure that whatever it is you're saying doesn't lead the cops to evidence of things you're actually doing, such as in Bobby Shmurda's case. Whether or not the police were enjoying a patrol drive while listening to 'Hot N*gga' and randomly decided to verify its details, no one knows. What we do know is that a lot of what Shmurda bragged about in the song, is exactly what the po-po found and more. He and his GS9 crew are now facing eight to 25 years of jail time for charges including conspiracy to commit murder, assault in the first degree, and illegal gun possession.

LIL CEASE AGAINST LIL KIM

When Kim was sentenced to just over a year in prison in 2005 for lying to a federal grand jury, to protect friends involved in a 2001 shootout outside a Manhattan radio station, her once friend Lil Cease and Junior Mafia label mate did not do the same to protect her from the slammer. Cease went to court and testified against Kim straight up, telling the prosecutors that he saw Kim on the scene. Considering the fact that they ran with a dangerous crowd, we figure Cease is somewhere in witness protection and has assumed an identity as an assistant called Biff Richards at an aquarium.

"LIGHT A CANDLE FOR DIBS" —AKA

From the wavy signature silk shirts that are now a global trademark, to his dance and posture, to the side-part comb-over hairstyle he rocked in his youth, Tata Madiba wasn't just a revolutionary icon, he was also dripping with swag. The kind of swag that only a rapper can capture with phly lyrics. As the phlyest of us all, we collected six dope facts about the big homie you probably did not know, and packaged them with a fitting line from a rap song. Brace yourself.

Lyric: "You gon' see lawyers and n*ggas in Jordans" – Kanye West, 'Mercy'

Fact: In 1952, Mandela and Oliver Tambo set up South Africa's first black-run law firm.

They provided affordable legal counsel to blacks who had broken apartheid-era laws. Mandela wrote in his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, "I realised quickly what Mandela and Tambo meant to ordinary Africans. It was a place where they could come and find a sympathetic ear and a competent ally, a place where they would not be either turned away or cheated, a place where they might actually feel proud to be represented by men of their own skin colour."

Lyric: "Haters can't see me, but them b*tches still looking for me" – Lil Wayne, 'She Will'

Fact: Mandela was a master of disguise and a genius at evading arrest.

He was dubbed the Black Pimpernel for his legendary ability to escape capture. He frequently disguised himself as a fieldworker, a chauffeur or a chef.

Lyric: "My life is played out like a Jheri curl, I'm ready to die!" – Notorious B.I.G., 'Ready To Die'

Fact: A courtroom speech about being ready to die helped save his life.

Mandela's speech during his trial received international attention and was published as *I Am Prepared to Die*. Ironically, expressing a willingness to be executed helped spare him that fate, and Mandela was sentenced to life in prison.

Lyric: "I be creepin' on the low" – Ludacris

Fact: In prison, he was highly skilled at secretly passing notes.

During his sentence on the infamous Robben Island, Mandela and the other prisoners would communicate by leaving notes in discarded matchboxes, under piles of dirty dishes, and

taped in toilet tanks. Using these methods, Mandela and the other prisoners organised a hunger strike and succeeded in their effort to improve their living conditions.

Lyric: "Frank Lucas is cool but I ain't tryna snitch/ I'ma follow the rules no matter how much time I'ma get" – Jay Z, 'No Hook'

Fact: He had a chance to get out of prison and declined, on principle.

In 1985 South African President PW Botha offered Mandela his freedom if he would agree to renounce armed struggle. He refused, saying, "What freedom am I being offered while the

organisation of the people remains banned? Only free men can negotiate. A prisoner cannot enter into contracts." Dibs knew the motto: NO SNITCHING.

Lyric: "Sishaya amaMovie" – Okmalumkoolkat, 'Amantombaze'

Fact: He appeared in a Spike Lee film.

Mandela has a cameo in 1992's *Malcolm X* as a teacher reciting one of the civil rights activists' speeches. Mandela declined to say the closing words by any means necessary, because of his peace stance, so Spike Lee cut back to footage of Malcolm X saying it.





25 YEARS

LET FREEDOM REIGN!

25 LOCAL RAPPERS UNDER 25

Conscious emcees are exactly that: conscious. Conscious of their surroundings, of themselves and how one relates to the other. And though the 'conscious' label is something that is viewed with indifference these days, in actuality, every person with a powerful enough voice is involved in telling our story, even if it's not intentional. With hip hop culture being a scene that is driven by progressive values, it's important that young voices always have a lane. With that said, in honour of 25 years since Tata's freedom, we show love to 25 local rappers who **HYPE** has interviewed at one point or another, who are all currently 25 or younger.

1/CASSPER NYOVEST

As one of, if not the most influential rapper in the country at the moment, Cassper Nyovest epitomises the spirit of youth. Outspoken, ambitious, hardworking and unpredictable at times, the Maftown prince has had his share of low moments, as anyone does. But as he's displayed when making amends with Vigi and AKA over the 'Beef' song, and the charity work he is known to do frequently, he is aware that having millions of eyes and ears at your mercy comes with responsibility. By the time Nyovest turned 24 last year, he had already won over 15 awards, dropped his first album, bought more than one property, employed his homies and graced his first **HYPE** cover, proving that age is not a parameter to success.

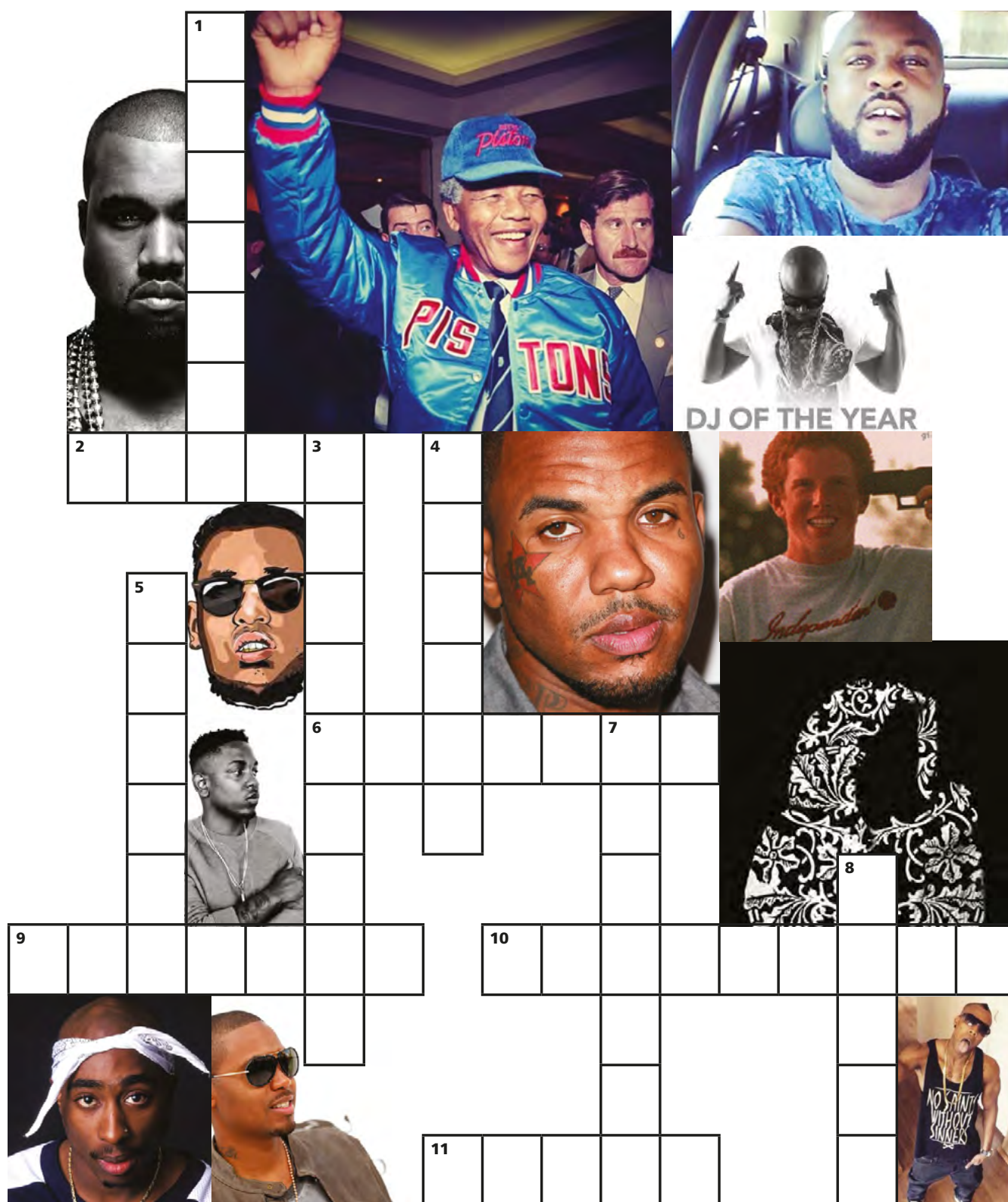


2. Anatii
3. Dash (Dreamteam)
4. Toya Delazy
5. Youngsta
6. Gigi LaMayne
7. Duncan
8. Smashis
9. Nadia Nakai
10. Saso (Dreamteam)
11. Mr Calibre (Fratpack)
12. One L
13. George Avakian
14. \$tilo Magolide
15. Maraza
16. Priddy Ugly
17. Chad Da Don
18. A-Reece
19. Chazz Le Hippy
20. Notshi
21. Lolo Vandal
22. Patty Monroe
23. 2leestark
24. Fonzo
25. Pug, Frenchise, Caprils (ICU)

"I ADMIRE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THEIR COMMUNITY AND NATION PERHAPS BECAUSE I ALSO BECAME INVOLVED IN STRUGGLE WHILE I WAS STILL AT SCHOOL."

- NELSON MANDELA

TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE



■ TWITTEVILLE

A glimpse into Twiterville to see what your favourite hip hop personalities think about while sitting on the toilet seat.

Tumi Molekane (@TumiMolekane)
Instead of City Press reporting that Cassper won and AKA (at the Metros) won they are trying to suggest this might create more beef. BOOO!!! #WhoKilled2Pac

Frank Gibberish (@FrankGibberish)
Tbo Touch wants a Metro award but his accent ain't a category.

Reason (@ReasonHD)
I wish #CoolerBag was my song ...

Blayze (@BlayzeEnt)
Just smiled my way out of paying for overweight luggage at the airport ... Thank u #Suka

AKA (@akaworldwide)
I'm about to start a family. You pirate my music you take food off my table. None of your bullsh*t Twitter reverse psychology can justify that.

Dj Dimplez (@DjDimplez)
Work on yourself as an individual. Be a good person not to be praised for it but to encourage others to be good and do good. It all starts with you.

AKA (@akaworldwide)
If you don't buy the music and I deny you a photo ... I can't 'lose' you as a fan ... you were never a fan to begin with.

Blaklez (@Blaklez)
We will change the fickle nature of this industry by making great music. If we fail, perhaps we will inspire others to continue the fight

Hip hop is naturally about free expression. See if you can score an A+ in this hip hop exam, which is all about freedom of course.

ACROSS

- 2 The two-fingered hand sign also known as deuces.
- 6 In Kendrick Lamar's 'The Blacker The Berry' he spits: "You never liked us anyway, f*ck your friendship I mean it. I am _____ American."
- 9 Track 12 on Game's *Jesus Piece* album is called _____.
- 10 This word is commonly used to describe rap that promotes social awareness and aims to educate.
- 11 Lil Wayne's 2010 album, which has a sequel of the same name from 2013, is titled *I Am Not A _____ Being*.

DOWN

- 1 Da L.E.S' second album _____ *Money* was released in 2014.
- 3 In Yeezy's famous rant on *Sway In The Morning*, he exclaimed: "You ain't been doing the _____."
- 4 The name of Ciara's baby daddy.
- 5 On which song did Tupac sing: "I know it seems evident, we ain't ready to see a black president"? (singular)
- 7 The black power fist in the air that Nas throws up in 'One Mic' is usually chanted saying which South African phrase which also means 'power' in Zulu?
- 8 Kanye is famously quoted saying: "No one man can have all this _____."



RIKY RICK

THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD

Starring	RIKHADO MAKHADO
Co-Starring	BOSS ZONKE
Head Script Writer	SPACEBOY P
Director	GOD
Director of Photography	AUSTIN MALEMA
Music By	RIKHADO MAKHADO
	GANJA BEATS
	BOYZNBUCKS
Producer	RIKHADO MAKHADO
Executive Producer	YOU

16LP

A HYPE STUDIOS MOTION PICTURE

*I heard once that they would rather hear how you got it over how much it cost you
Rather hear about finding yourself and how you lost you
Rather you make this an open letter
About family and struggle and taking it over
About hearts that you've broken and ties that you've severed
No doubt in my mind, that'll make them feel better
Drake, 2011*

Such is the Tale of Riky Rick





OPENING SCENE

People misinterpreted the movie *Scarface*. It wasn't a film about the glorification of drugs or gangsterism. It wasn't about those flashy big body whips or the lavish Persian carpets and Italian finishes on the living room furniture. It wasn't about taking a man's wife to assert dominance and becoming the sovereign head honcho in the city. It wasn't about violence. It wasn't about money and it certainly wasn't about recognition. The movie wasn't even about the complex and diabolically grandiose protagonist, Tony Montana, portrayed by the great Al Pacino. In its most stripped down form, the movie *Scarface* was a story about hope.

That is why generations of hustlers and dreamers from all walks of life relate to it so much; because there's nothing like a story about triumph and glory. Fictional or not, we have a predisposition to rally behind the man who has nothing except his passion and his drive, and is courageous enough to face the odds stacked against him to make his dreams come true. We also love Tony because in another way, he is telling our story. No matter your bank statement or social status, everyone battles internal demons at some point. Some exist in a state of mental or emotional destitution as a result of crushed ambitions. Many have aspirations we don't dare dream about because our immediate surroundings and circumstances put limits on our imagination.

These stories are vessels of hope, representing the idea more than anything else that anything is possible. They help us keep the hope alive. The same with movies like *Rocky*, *Forrest Gump*, *Django* and the true stories of Frank Lucas (parents violently murdered by KKK in front of him as a child), Notorious B.I.G (poor and facing imprisonment), 50 Cent (got shot nine times before signing a deal meant to help him realise his longtime musical goals), Kanye West (was constantly told throughout his childhood that he was weird and didn't fit in). They all conquered unimaginable difficulties to eventually be on top. These stories have the power to inspire.

The thing with real life is that often we are only privy to the ending of the movie. There are hardly ever cameras or paparazzi when the groundwork is being laid down. No victory hymns or 'I love you' placards when the grind is at its most intense. We know about Spider-Man but neglect what it took for Peter Parker to become a web-slinging bada*s. Our starting point is the scene where the struggle is accomplished and they are reaping the rewards of the battles fought. He is invincible and people are chanting his name while being crowd-surfed to a room where he will be fed succulent grapes by the hands of the most attractive, immoral 20-somethings the world has to offer. Not realising that more times than not, if the movie is a success, the scenes leading up to that moment are the best parts. Those are the parts that make us believe in him. They put the victory in context.

This analogy is no less true for Ricky Rick. Sweeping the industry off its feet in the past year with already a cultural impact that is unmatched for a hip hop artist in the country to achieve in such a short time, there is little

that the KwaMashu artist can do wrong at the moment. He has captured the spirit of the youths with his contagious songs and production credits on 'Boss Zonke', 'Nafulwa', 'The Business' and 'Slyza Totsi'; carved a space in music where kwaito/house and hip hop audiences can co-exist without selling out their styles; influenced street fashion in a way that no non-fashion personality in South Africa has done in a while (or ever?); and amassed a cult-like following without an album.

Every couple of years a truly special artist comes along who people buy into, beyond the music, because something about them speaks to our sincerity and our beings, but we're not sure what or why. In Ricky's case, when you shed the palladium boots, the inhumanly perfectly shaped beard, the umswenko and every title and term that alludes to his coolness, the 'Boss Zonke' vests and everything one sees on the surface, he is simply Rikhado Makhado. And his is a story of triumph and redemption. From his modest home studio, he narrates his tale.

SCENE 1: I THINK I'M MAKAVELI

2009 – 2010, Johannesburg

**"THAT'S THE REASON I WAS STUDYING AT AFDA.
'CAUSE I DON'T WANNA BE THE N*GGA STIRRING UP
YOUR LAUGHTER"**

It's mid 2009 somewhere in the north and an avid 23-year-old Ricky Rick has long discovered his talent and is now exploring his artistry. A Tupac fan from day one, thanks to his uncle who used to pick him up from primary school blasting the *Makaveli* album, rapping is a dream that he is trying to pursue at a time when there isn't really a commercial avenue for 'new school' values in the local rap scene.

"My main influence when I started rapping was 2Pac, my uncle used to play that sh*t in the car. I know people say that all the time but it's a real story for me. People ask, 'How'd you start rapping?' I'm always like, '2Pac.' Everyone is always trying to go so far back into hip hop and to show how much they know. But honestly the first thing I really knew of rap was Pac. It must've been in '96, could even be '97 maybe. That's when I started to understand rap music."

But after being turned down by producer after producer, Ricky had at this point already taught himself from scratch to create beats using an MPC machine and laptop, and had started to record demo tapes at home. During this first real spurt of creative catharsis, his first real projects *Fish & Chips* and *Comeback Kid* were produced and this sparked the first industry interest in the unknown rapper's career. Disillusioned and frustrated with the industry because of unfruitful efforts to break through, Ricky expands his creative ability, enrolling into the School of Motion Picture

Medium and Live Performance (AFDA), learning to direct and shoot motion pictures. Ricky drops his first video to ever flight on TV, 'I Need Money', which features a 19-year-old Boity as the lead, and has moderate success. A professional relationship is sparked with close family friend and buzzing artist Da L.E.S, who is an established new school rap artist and part of super group Jozi at this time.

SCENE 2: THE WONDER YEARS

2010 – 2011, Johannesburg/Amsterdam

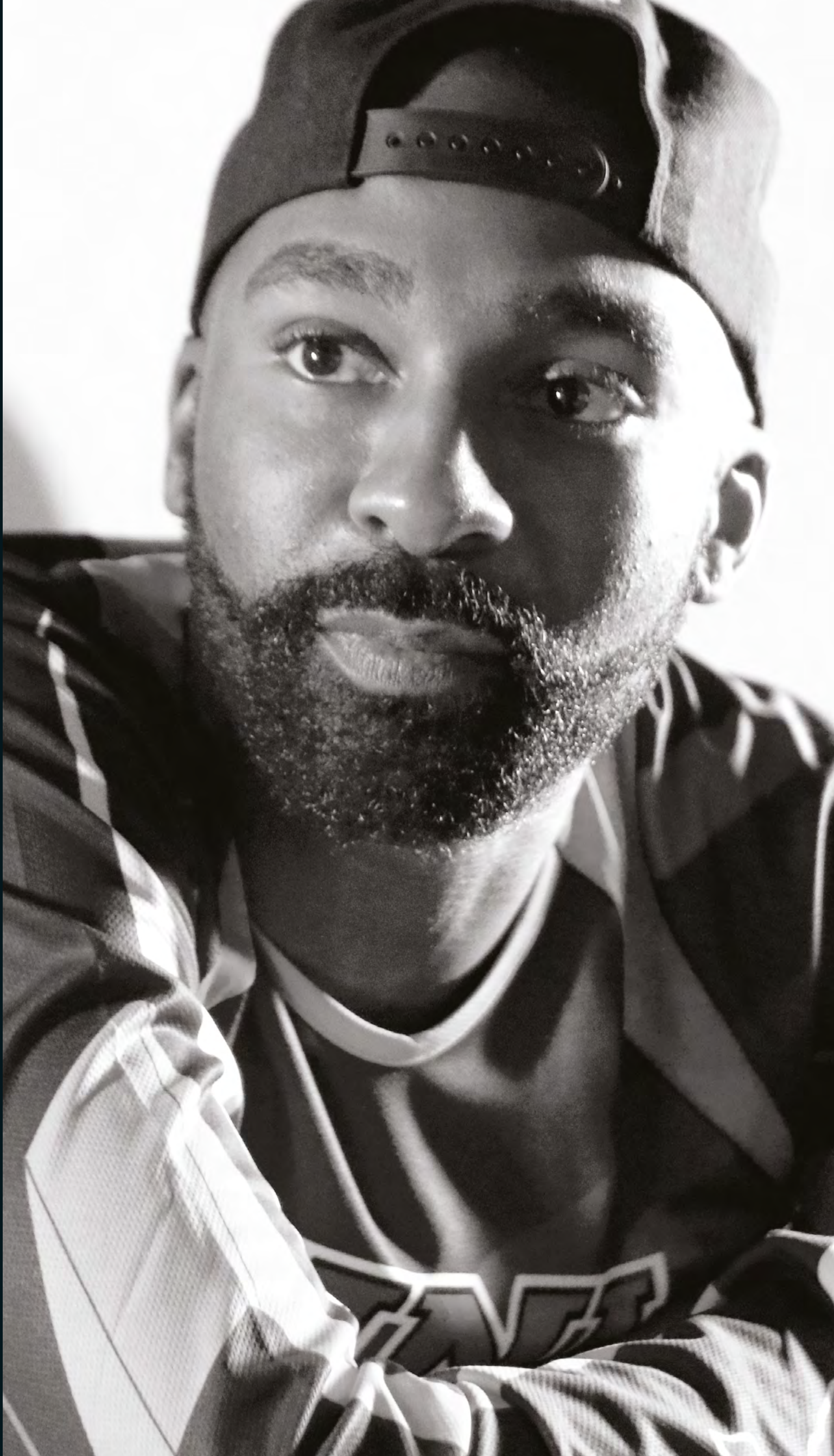
The relationship with Da L.E.S, founded on the common admiration for holistic freshness in life, with Les championing a 'Fresh 2 Def' movement through his music and personal style and Ricky being one of the country's premier sneakerheads at the time. The two begin to record together religiously, blessing Ricky's sample-based instrumentals with slick vocals to create a sound that was contentiously labelled 'American' by many local heads who heard it at the time. Consolidating the best of those sessions into a now underground classic mixtape titled *Last Summer*, Les and Ricky dropped the feel-good project and challenged the sound of rap music being released. Featuring Maggz and Gotti Gambino, the free mixtape became the

soundtrack for the alternative rap listener, and solidified Ricky's talent as both a producer and vocalist.

"I've got an immense respect for Les, and when we were working together it was a really dope vibe. It was something new to the game. It's just that obviously sometimes you're not ready. You're young and don't know what it means to do something that can change the game. You're not prepared for it so you take it lightly." He continues: "It's crazy because he used to tell me I was the best all the time. But five years ago if I had to tell him that I'd be in this position today, I don't know if people would've created the action for us to make that happen. So we f*cked around for a lot of time – partying, drinking and doing other sh*t that young cats in the game do."

"I think he was also at a different space at the time because he wanted to get more out of the Jozi thing and figure out who he was as a solo artist. And the relationship made sense because I was just hungry to learn and was making like six beats a day on command," he recollects with glee in his eyes. "I would make a beat, record a sample, do a hook and get him to record on it all on the same day; it was magic. But after *Last Summer* it never worked out. We dropped the tape and we couldn't make any records after that and to this day I don't really understand why."

[Pause movie. Toilet break]





[Press play]

As he plays 'Wonder Years', his "favourite song of all time" featured in his debut *Family Values*, he relives the breakdown of his relationship with his estranged partner and collaborator. "It was hard for me back then, I won't lie to you. Now, as a more established artist I can understand and make peace with it. But back then I didn't understand that there can only be one champion in a certain space. More especially when you're young and you're trying to figure yourself out. How do you have time to groom someone else and put them on game when you yourself are fighting for your dream and your vision? When you're trying to define yourself to the world. It's impractical. It's just that lil' bro validation I was looking for from my big homie and I didn't understand his position back then. And that's why now, as someone who is trying to do that myself, I tell young artists who look up to me and work with me that I can't take you to the place where you need to be musically. I can't take you there, and I don't have the capabilities to do that. I don't have the selflessness to do that and that's the truth, so I could never hold that against someone else. It's a hard thing to do."

For those who had the pleasure of receiving the *Last Summer* project during the time that it dropped, it doesn't come as a surprise that one of the most frequently asked questions that both rappers still receive from fans is: what happened with Ricky and Les? Sonically ahead of its time and unique in its approach, the mixtape was representative of the then-brewing alternative culture of hip-hoppers who make up most of the local commercial scene today. No-one cracks the code for the lottery and then just decides, "Nah, I'm going to call it quits now."

"Years later, around 2013, we started to strike

up a relationship again. Things weren't the same but we were cool. And then I was like, 'Yo, I'm finished with my album,' which at the time was called *Life And Death of Ricky Rick*. I told him, 'Come over to the studio, I need a verse from you,' and he didn't pitch up. I think that's the time I really started to understand that we were just at different places in our lives and things would never be the same. Too much had gone down between the two of us and at that point I also just wasn't into doing the things we used to do. All I wanted was to be in the studio and express myself and he was going a different direction. For a long time I couldn't think about this and not be consumed by it, you know? But looking back, I think it was for the best because a lot of kids don't ever get to reach their potential because they spend all their time trying to follow what their friends are doing. If it wasn't for that experience, I probably would've never gotten to this point. And writing this song was the only way I could ever express this to him."

At this point, Ricky took a break from music and relocated to Amsterdam for a short period where he tried to reignite his passion for music and shot the video for another underground internet classic 'Gone'.

SCENE 3: GONE

2011 – 2012, Johannesburg/Amsterdam

While in Amsterdam, Ricky meets Cassper Nyovest on Facebook. Never having met in person, the two develop a mutual respect for each other's music and start to send tracks back and forth.

"It's weird because Cassper and I met in such a weird way [laughs]. I guess he somehow found my stuff on the net and reached out to me. From there we started talking and I would send him beats on email and he would record on them and always try to figure out a way to take the songs to the next level. I wasn't really taking it seriously at the time because I wasn't too into the music at this point. But I admired how passionate this stranger was about this little relationship we had struck up. From there, I kind of started to realise that he was a star and would be a problem in the future of local music." He pauses to remember something. "I remember coming back to SA, being in clubs and telling people, 'Yo, there's this Cassper guy and I think he's gonna be huge.' More than that, he believed in me more than I believed in myself at a time when I wasn't focused on music. He always used to say, 'The game needs you, Ricky! The game needs you!' And when both of us started to build momentum down the line, we always supported each other. And that's why I always say he brought me back in the rap game. I don't think that if it wasn't for him, I'd have started exploring my love for music again."

[Fast forward movie]

In present day, he is sitting in his home studio conflicted over whether to play the next song or not. "Some of these songs, I can't listen to. I make them and then I never listen to them again. Because these are real life experiences, not just scenarios I'm making up for the sake of music."

Puzzled by the awkward introduction to the next song, and when 'Pappa Song' comes to completion it all makes sense. Penning a letter to his unborn child, Ricky creates a hypothetical scenario where he was not able to control his drug addiction and as a result was not there to watch his son grow up. The scenario is fictional but the place where it stems from is not. For a long period in his early twenties, Ricky battled with alcohol and drug addiction, going on binges and spending time in and out of rehab. As the song explains, the lack of a father figure in his life affected him greatly and often in times where he sought paternal guidance, he turned to various substances to help him cope with the pressures of life. Dealing with that, the death of his compadre, fellow producer 'Fuzzy' (mentioned on 'Gone'), and frustrations from feeling artistically repressed, Ricky spent a few years falling in and out of love with music, and frequently getting high to balance out his low points.

"I'm at a point now where I can't be afraid to talk about these things. I've been through so much in my life and doubted myself for so long that right now, with my music and personally, you'll either accept me for what I am and vibe with me, or you won't. There's no middle ground."

"Plus I just feel like with music right now, there is a lot of bullsh*t that rappers feed to the public; me included. Not from a production or musical standpoint, but from a content perspective. With rap being such a culture of 'cool', there are certain topics that are considered cheesy or not acceptable to talk about, you know what I mean? We talk about umswenko and having nice kicks and expensive clothes, but who's gonna tell these kids about paying taxes? Who's gonna tell them to be there for their families and dream big? Who's gonna



make sure that they stay true to themselves and not fall victim to peer pressure? I feel a personal responsibility to be that person. Because personally I can't in good faith know these things but then jump on a song and spread ignorance. The time for that is over."

SCENE 4:

2012 – 2013, Johannesburg/Cape Town

It's mid 2012, the evening of the South African launch of Kanye West's Yeezy 2 sneaker, where Riky, a respected member of the local sneaker game, has been recruited to help launch the pair at Shelflife Store in Cape Town. At 2am, riding off the energy from an eventful night and some shots of Patron, Riky is seated on the floor of the loft apartment of an acquaintance, along with longtime friend Scoop Makhathini and a group of other people. Emotional about his upcoming album *The Life and Death of Riky Rick*, he starts to rap the first few lines from the album a cappella:

*I'm feeling like Stevie Wonder, somebody give me light
I need a personal Jesus, somebody make me right
Everything is so fast I just wanna slow it down
I'm feeling like Mary J, I think I'm going down
Lost my n*gga ----- and I miss him so much
Wish I could'a seen my best friend grown up
Nobody lives forever but I wish you could've tried
When I'm feeling lonely I'm wishing I could've died
Cocaine got my mind twisted
And I'm sipping on this moonshine, mama told me it would be the death of me*

[Fast forward movie]

Riky is in California kicking it with American skater, acclaimed designer, artist and tastemaker Levi Maestro who he has struck up a friendship with (again, based on the common admiration for 'fresh sh*t'). During this period he is introduced to the Bay Area's key players in the industry and by some peculiar but welcomed series of events finds himself in studio with Def Jam artist Dom Kennedy who praises his music and production style. This is followed by a few more meetings and studio sessions of this kind, which re-inspire his ongoing affair with trying to make it as an established rapper/producer. After soaking up the entire experience, he moves back to South Africa, admits himself to rehab and gets clean for good.

SCENE 5: SHINING

2013 – 2014, Johannesburg/Durban/Cape Town/PE/ PMB, and so forth

With a fresh mindset, Riky emerges from the shadows and starts the completion of the 'first' album that has been over five years in the making. Rejuvenated by the brewing success of longtime friend Smiso Zwane,

**I'M NOT HERE TO GIVE YOU
HITS OR RADIO SINGLES.
I'M ACTUALLY HERE TO
TELL YOU MY STORY.**

aka Okmalumkoolkat, and the childhood friends collective Boyznbucks, his approach to 'commercial' music starts to shift and his sound is seen in a new public light.

"Not to take anything away from other artists, but Okmalumkoolkat is the creator of all these rappers' new styles at the moment. He made that cool. He is one of the most creative people I have ever met and I think people don't give him the credit he deserves because he is focused on bigger things than just rap music, in particular. He's a different kind of guy than the rest of us. A true genius.

"With 'Amantombazane' we recorded the first version of that song years ago. So when we started to work again, he suggested we relook that collaboration. I was working on making a West Coast Dr. Dre beat at the time and we fused that with some of that old material and that's how the song came about. I actually have to give a lot of credit to Malum because he is the one who opened up that channel in local rap music. The rest of us just took the elements from his music we recognised the people liked and continued to put it in our music."

What's interesting about the song that ignited the fire that is the new and improved Riky Rick, is that the song was never meant for himself. "You have no idea how many established artists I tried to give that song away to; I did that with a lot of beats actually. I made the beat years ago, recorded the demo and no one was interested in it; everyone was saying that it wasn't the sound they were looking for. So f*ck it, I made the song myself and now everyone wants a beat like 'Amantombazane.'" [laughs].

'Amantombazane' drops and the rest as they say, is history.

CLOSING SCENE

2015, Khustic Studio, Johannesburg

"I'm not here to give you hits or radio singles. I'm actually here to tell you my story. So disappointment or not, I don't think it matters what people think. This album is really for people who are trying to grow themselves and be better versions of themselves. It's not an album for sheep or people who are just following, everything that we're doing now is to try to teach people that ignorance or any of that stuff doesn't have any place here. You have to try to open your mind to different things. I'm not saying I'm bringing hip hop back 'cause I don't believe that one person can do that. But I can try to bring back self-esteem to kids that you can do any type of music you want, and not be afraid to be who you are, no matter what."

THE END

[Cue theme music. Plays 'Till I Die']



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